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# WORKS

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JEWISH FAMILY PAPERS;

OR,

# LETTERS OF A MISSIONARY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

DR. WILHELM HERZBERG ("GUSTAV MEINHARDT"),

BY THE

Rev. Dr. FREDERIC de SOLA MENDES,

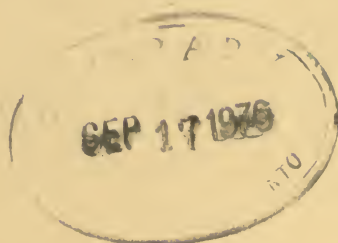
*Adjunct Minister of the Congregation "Shaaray Tephila," New York.*



NEW YORK :

American Jewish Publication Society.

October, 1875.



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PLATE III - 1841-1842

# NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

THE two remaining works announced on last page for publication in 1875 have been withdrawn for the present. In their stead the following essays are issued with this volume:—

ZUNZ:—THE JEWISH MORALISTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES, from his work "*Zur Geschichte und Literatur.*"

PERLES:—THE WEDDING AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES OF THE HEBREWS IN POST-BIBLICAL TIMES.

For 1876, and by special permission of the Author's heirs, the late DR. ABRAHAM GEIGER'S Classical Lectures on the History of Judaism will be issued early in the Spring.

The selection of the works just named will, we trust, satisfy our subscribers that we are earnestly striving to attain the objects for which the American Jewish Publication Society has been established, viz.: to make accessible to the English-reading public the best and most reliable sources of information on the Philosophy, History, and Literature of Judaism. Acting on behalf of an Association that embraces men of all shades of opinions, we take our stand on *perfectly neutral ground*. The works proposed for publication are judged solely by their *literary* merits, without any reference whatever to the particular views and sentiments, which must be looked upon as those of the authors or (regarding prefaces and notes) of the translators only, and as in no way committing the officers of the Society.

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

*of the A. J. P. S.*

## P R E F A C E .

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A FEW words on the origin of the following translation will testify to the value of the work which is here presented in a new dress to the English-reading public. The Translator was yet studying at the Breslau Theological Seminary when the book was first brought under his notice by a fellow-student, one of its most enthusiastic admirers. A large number of copies were at once procured and read with avidity by our comrades. It is impossible to describe the applause the book called forth: never had we read so glowing and so powerful a vindication of pure Judaism. We were rejoiced that the country which had produced an Eisenmenger, a Wagenseil, Schudt, Pfefferkorn, *et hoc genus omne*, should have yielded in our day too so triumphant a Defender of the Faith. Our venerable Director, the Very Rev. Dr. Frankel (to whom be peace!) was as enthusiastic as any of his young disciples in its praise.

It was then that the undersigned conceived the idea of rendering the book accessible to his English brethren. The work of translation was commenced and carried on in leisure intervals for the next few years. In January, 1874, in conjunction with Mr. A. Herzberg, then of London, brother of the author, a prospectus was issued in England, proposing the publication of the work by subscription. The project was heartily indorsed by the Very Rev. the Chief Rabbi and the Rev. Dr. Herrman Adler, the latter of whom kindly made valuable suggestions as to omissions and alterations proper in a version to

come before average English readers. The matter, however, not being taken up by the Anglo-Jewish public, the work is now presented to the Jews of America under the auspices of the American Jewish Publication Society.

The translation here offered contains all the alterations agreed upon for the London issue. Being the result of the intermittent labor of years, it is hoped that most imperfections have been eliminated; the peculiar philosophical character of the middle portions, however, has rendered the translation somewhat more difficult than the general run of German books.

The Translator has added a few notes, explaining references which would otherwise be obscure to the ordinary lay-reader, Hebrew or Christian.

Trusting that this little work will be well received by our brethren, both Jew and Gentile—the former of whom will derive valuable support and information, the latter respectful and considerate instruction therefrom—a hearty “God-speed!” is wished it by

NEW YORK, October,  $\frac{5636}{1875}$ .

THE TRANSLATOR.



## LETTER I.

S——, Sept. 20th, 185—.

I ARRIVED yesterday and am living with Rabbi Nathan. All passed off easily, more easily than I expected, and the Lord be praised, I stand on the threshold of my longed-for labor.

I am sitting in a back room of the old Frankish house; my windows look out upon a large yard filled with children at play. Now and then their merry laughter reaches my ear, as I sit poring over a fine edition of the *Mishna*,<sup>1</sup> which my kind host has permitted me to bring to my room. At one time my heart beats high within me, in joyful, almost boastful exultation, and then again I shudder and draw back, and call myself unworthy, weak—but am I not fighting for a higher power? Is not my aim a lofty one, and if I reach it, do I not labor for all eternity? But let me tell you about my journey in proper order.

I left Hartlepool, whence I wrote you last, in the *Neptune*, at midnight, and arrived, after a rather rough passage of forty-eight hours, in Hamburg. The boat remained all night, I know not wherefore, lying in the middle of the Elbe, but the passengers were allowed, if they chose, to disembark. I had been so unwell on the voyage, and the air in the cabin was so close and oppressive, that I honestly longed for the comfort of a respectable hotel.

My fellow-voyagers had passed the time in playing cards all the way. Among them was a tall, pale young man, who was equally anxious with me to reach *terra firma*. There were plenty of boats alongside, and looking out our luggage from the pile the steamer had brought along, we soon landed in the pitch-dark night in the quay. I was agreeably surprised to find that the Customs-authorities, so troublesome with us, left me quite undisturbed, and with the pleasant feeling of a difficulty overcome, I was whirled along into the town. My companion asked me whether I intended to put up

at any particular hotel; if not, he proposed *the King of Portugal*, where he usually stopped; I had no objection, and thither we went.

The change of scene, the anticipation of the new circumstances I was approaching, had so excited me that I became more talkative than usual, and my companion's melancholy taciturnity and short answers did not attract my notice. His pale face, as he listlessly stared into the flame of the street lamps, drew my attention. I asked him, in some concern, if he were unwell, and no great persuasion was needed to draw from the poor fellow the history of his misfortune. He had failed, he said, in business, through fraud on the side of his partner, and had to flee from his native town, leaving his young wife and an infant three months old. He had spent two months in England in great distress, looking for a means of livelihood, but in vain. He intends now to give himself up to justice, and purchase the vicinity of his darlings with imprisonment. For the present, he intends to hide in Hamburg and await news from them; I had to promise him to seek out his wife and child in S——. I was sorry for him, but his confidence, especially in such a delicate personal matter, seemed to me too easily given, and it made me somewhat suspicious. I rejected therefore, without much ado, his proposition that we should hire a room in common, held no more conversation with him, and upon arrival at the hotel, had myself shown into a chamber where I could drink my tea alone.

I sat quietly by the cozy fireside and let the wounds of the past cross my mind in review. What have I done that I should not be rejected like the rest? Verily, many are called, but few are chosen, and, mindful of my unworthiness, I am overcome with humility!

I saw myself a timid boy again, hurrying over the Moorfield hills, and wandering about our splendid park in my early solitude. I do not remember ever having joined in boyish games; is it only that I have forgotten? I know I often stood wondering afar off when the others romped in joyous childish sport; just as, later, I used to watch, not without an envious feeling, when the young men of my age whirled along in the dance, holding some blooming girl in their arms. They enjoyed a pleasure I did not comprehend, because I never had experienced it; I should indeed very much have liked to do so, but I knew not how to set about it. Why did not the boys ask me to join them in their play, like they did others, whose par-

ents they were incessantly begging for permission? Why did they fall to whispering to each other when they caught sight of me, and grow silent when I drew near? I could not imagine the reason.

How powerful, even in the boy, was the instinctive sense of gratitude for deeds of benevolence! I thought the world centred in me, and I would execute something new, something unheard of: I would become a benefactor of my brethren. In my dreams I beheld myself possessed of King Solomon's signet. Then I would fill the boxes of the poor, secretly and by night, with glittering gold, and with delight depicted to myself their joy when they unexpectedly discovered the treasure in the morning. Poor child! hoping to make men happy—*with gold!*

You gave me a peculiar education. I was not suffered to enter the close class-room, had no need to fear the rod of the angry school-master who stood among the boys like the arbiter of worlds on the day of judgment. I used to go to the rector. Why, I knew not. I never asked myself why I studied Hebrew in addition, while the other boys had enough with their Latin and Greek, nor why I had to learn all those curious customs and observances. I should have liked the study well, almost too well, if that man had not been my teacher. I know you did not like him either. His dignified, pompous air when silent, and that continual sweet smile when he opened his lips—I never ventured to be myself, to be natural, in his presence. For he was always wound up, always the same: the same sanctimonious vanity always shot from the small, black, piercing eyes; the same saintly humility was always displayed on his flat forehead and sharp-cut nose. "I wonder whether he winds himself up at night or in the morning?" I used to ask myself; "I should dearly like to see him once unwound!" I did not *fear* the man, I rather felt disposed to hate him, and when he went so far as to pat my head with his hand, I shuddered and felt a repugnance amounting to disgust. When I sat in front of him, with my head bent over the book, attentively translating the Hebrew words, if I came to a difficult passage and looked up into his ashy face, with its high, bald forehead, there he used to sit leaning back in his chair, his shallow black wig displaced, and his own red hair sprouting out beneath it. I could not speak then: I could not hear him—I saw his lips moving, talking to me; but my childish mind was so full of

dread, that it seemed convulsed, and my members refused their office.

He never punished me. He was silent when he saw I did not speak, and sent me home. Like a released captive, I walked along, reeling under the oppression of his presence, until the meadows and gardens roused me, and running and jumping made me forget what I had felt. I used to go then better prepared for the next lesson; I translated fluently and noted his corrections, but I dared not look at him; if I did, the same spell came upon me! Every other man I looked free and openly in the face; from this one, I recoiled as if I bore a sense of blackest guilt in my soul, known to him alone; I shuddered before him as before a guilty conscience!

How different it was in your lessons, my dear father! You I *could* look at, and how I loved to look! Your earnest, calm countenance, in which the firm, blue eyes gazed upon the questioner, inspiring confidence; the calmness and humanity of your whole being penetrated me with beneficent warmth. Still I used to prefer being with you out of lesson-time. There was no difficulty with secular instruction, but oh! those religious lessons! Not an hour, but an eternity they used to last! When the lesson commenced, I felt like a pilgrim taking leave of his friends and entering the glowing desert, and when the clock struck, I sprang up joyfully, like a prisoner released.

I took to every other branch of knowledge easily; but theology remained a closed book with seven seals. To please you, I learned the subject by heart, mechanically, and sighed as I blamed my weak intellect that could not fathom its meaning. My dearest wish was to have a genius for theology, in order to delight you by my proficiency in your favorite study. But as soon as I tried to penetrate to the *sense* of your words (and I loved you too well not to try often), I lost my composure, and while I listened to you with my eyes bent on the book, with all my powers strained to follow you, the same awful sensation fell upon me that the rector used to inspire. But when, bewildered and in speechless dread, I raised my eyes, expecting to see that man's pale features, and I gazed on your true, kind eyes instead, a curious sense of confidence pervaded me, for I saw *you*, and my eyes would not cease gazing. I saw my benefactor—the modest, pious man, the friend of the poor, who had taken the destitute boy



into his house, and cared for him more than a father could. Yes, noble-minded man, I forgot your words, thinking of yourself, or, let me confess, I *heard* you not, I *felt* you: joy and admiration of your kind heart quite filled up mine. But with all this joy there was mingled a strange and painful feeling: you loved me so well, and yet I could not understand you!

How curious children's hearts are! Grown-up people look down like gods upon them, and yet they are men too, with more intense feelings, weaker passions, and nobler impulses. We should never forget they are human beings in miniature: more resembling animals, it is true, but nearer also to the angels. As a child, I had curious feelings, which I do not even understand now. I used actually to pity you, my dear father, as you looked me earnestly in the face and taught the doctrine of Salvation, or used I to pity myself? I know my heart was full of tender compassion, and when you used to speak eloquently and earnestly—why shall I not confess now that I am no more bashful, confess what, as a boy, I kept hidden like a crime from you, would fain have hidden from myself? Your words reached my ear—but no farther! You spoke in German, my mother-tongue: Chinese would not have sounded stranger, and all the inspiring pictures and parables of the Evangelists passed like unsubstantial shadows before my eyes. And—why shall I not speak the truth and illustrate what I owe to you?—and the foolish lad used to grow terrified especially at the picture of the Sufferer! Oft did you paint in glowing enthusiasm the pains he took upon himself, to redeem mankind! You showed me the glorious form nailed to the cross, and purple drops of blood oozing from his hands and feet, falling on to the yellow sand! I watched how the bitter agony distorted his mild features, and I shuddered at the sight!

I have so long laughed at your doctrine of original sin that I almost begin to believe it; for what else could it have been but my sinful sensualism that combated that man's moral excellence? "Death! death!" it rang through me like the tolling of a funeral bell; I am only just entering life, and they are teaching me to leave it! Misdirecting a longing, which only in dreams yearns for the welfare of humanity, crippling the holy emotions of a pure and noble heart, they strive to make the future *man* believe that a *woman's* virtue is the highest of all! Wherein should I imitate him: him, the example of all man-

kind? I could not work miracles, I could not preach better than he; what remains—*but to die like him?* I froze with horror at the thought, and sat like one dead, till you closed your book and gave the sign for freedom!

How happy is the child's disposition that can cast off the burden of the past like a knapsack from the shoulders! In the open air, in the company of my flowers, my fowls and pigeons, not a recollection of my former dread remained. Yet I was not quite emancipated from it. It came back at night. I never told you; I do not know why, I was afraid to tell you. That was the reason I asked you, shyly at first, then imploringly, to let me have a candle burning all night; you refused with good-natured chiding, and I slunk away, ashamed of my weakness. But when I lay in bed, and old Esther came and took away the light—she did it as late as possible, good soul!—then I drew the coverlet over my head, for I knew It would come. And It did come. Horror and agony settled on my chest and pressed and crushed me down. What was it that lay like a hundredweight upon me, so that I gasped for breath, and thought I was suffocating? Was it not the pale form of the Sufferer, who embraced me with giant arms? It bore upon me, crushing me with savage glee; I gasped and groaned; it sought to kill me, I resisted and wrestled with all my strength. In agony I uttered a cry for help—who called? All was silent, all in fearful gloom. I had awakened. I lay bathed in perspiration, and dared not draw down the coverlet, my only protection, one hair's-breadth from my head, for around my bed the figures of my dream stood like exorcised spirits, and stretched their lean arms toward me. Thus I remained in a fever of terror, and waited for dawn. The first ray of light reassured me, I drew down the counterpane, ventured to put my arms outside, and after I had timidly gazed around the room and seen nobody was there, I lay down and enjoyed a short doze. You know now, dear father, why I was always a pale, weakly lad. Often you used to take the books out of my hand and send me out into the fresh air. It was not the need of that. It was the need of sleep, and that fearful nightmare!

I fell asleep by the fireside in the Hamburg hotel, thinking of my boyhood's fearful dreams, and lo!—*they came again!* The Form threw me to the ground, knelt upon my breast. I struggled for breath in vain under the load, again I heard those fearful groans out

of the corner of the room, and It glided close by me!—I was unwell, my father; truly, I was unwell. I awoke. The fire had gone out, the candles burned deep in their sockets. I got up and looked at my watch: night was nearly over. In deep anxiety I walked up and down my room. I examined my past life, summoned to my recollection every one with whom I had ever come in contact, but could not find myself guilty of any crime. True, human-like, I had often erred; but I could detect no sin that could warrant the consciousness of such guilt as I experienced in my dreams. What was it that so persecuted me; that, with a blow, annihilated my hard-won repose? I had striven with all the powers of my mind, had investigated and pondered for years, and had attained at length, if not conviction, at least consoling faith. Am I another being when unconscious? Was a flow of blood, a morbid disturbance of my nerves, to shatter thus my plans like wretched card-houses? My heart leaped within me in deadly terror, like a roe startled by the hunter's shot; I was alone, alone, and nobody to give me succor!

Is the curse mightier than the blessing? Does the Lord visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children unto the thousandth generation? Thus hath He not promised! *What is it* that terrifies and misleads me? Have I not devoted my earthly life to the poor lost sheep of Israel in order that they may partake of true life? Ah, I have it; surely my crime is that I have as yet done nothing toward this end! When I have done for one of the wanderers what you did for me, father, then will everlasting peace fill my breast; I shall expiate the sin of my people with the help of Divine grace: I shall be happy *when I have done my duty!*

Enough for to-day.

Yours, in truth,

SAMUEL.

## LETTER II.

SEPTEMBER 28TH, 185—.

My journey from Hamburg was not marked by any event of importance, and I found myself next morning at my destination. The day for which I had so often longed had at length arrived, and it was with a beating heart that I took my seat in the stage. The journey was tedious, seemed interminable, but at last the coach stopped before a small, unpretending house, and I sprang down. A dirty, narrow lane with small stores, at the doors of which dark-eyed men and women were chatting. I knocked, and gave my card to the old servant who opened. She led me to a room and bade me sit down and wait. Trembling with excitement, I walked up and down the room. Would they receive me without suspicion? Would not the next moment witness the crushing of the long-cherished plan? And what right had I to force my way here under a deceitful mask, and carry discord perhaps into a quiet family circle?

Fie upon those foolish qualms of conscience; inspired only by childish bashfulness! My goal rose like a flaming beacon before me, and I thought of my vows to you. My eyes flashed once more then, my heart throbbed violently: was I not imitating those great martyrs who fought against error with mental weapons? What our great predecessors did for the heathen, we will do for the forsaken children of Israel. They are still accursed wanderers on the face of the earth; they are wretched; we will comfort them. How is it possible they should not be sunk in sin, when they know not Him who took all sin upon Himself? That baseness and crime should not be their lot, since the iron hand of tyranny has ruled them for centuries? The first part of religion's miracle has been accomplished, the European heathen has been converted, and truth spreads ever farther over the earth; but the holy, the chosen people is still banished from its King's royal presence, still is it stiff-necked and obstinate;



but love shall effect what hatred failed to do, and fulfill the whole of the great prophecy.

With these thoughts in my mind, I remained standing in the reception room, until the door opened and the Rabbi appeared. He was a man of middle stature, in a long old-fashioned robe, with a small velvet cap upon his head. A dark, almost melancholy cast of countenance, with quiet, soft eyes, and a long gray beard, which accorded well with the dignity of the man's whole appearance.

I stood perplexed, uncertain how I should greet my uncle. He approached me slowly, took my hand and kissed me on both cheeks. "Blessed be he who cometh!" said he, "welcome, Samuel, my son!"

He held me long in his arms: when he released me, I saw tears in his eyes. I was touched, for I had not expected such warmth.

"Uncle, you remember my father?"

He looked at me reproachfully. "How should I forget my own blood, my younger brother, who grew up at my side? He lacked your quiet countenance, he was wild and restless. He soon went into the country as a peddler, while I sat in the *Beth Hamedrash* (college) and studied. Then he married and emigrated, over the ocean, to America. Thirty years ago! At first I hoped for a letter from day to day, from week to week; then I gave up the hope. I often reflected, 'He does not write because he is not prospering'—then I felt that he was dead, and I grieved I knew not of his end. At last I received your letter with that of your foster-father; what joyous hours you caused me! For I did not know I had a nephew—but here I stand prating and forget that you have traveled all night. You are weary and need repose!"

"Not so, uncle," I answered, "let me stay with you if your business allows it."

"If my business allows it! How you speak to your uncle! Shall I not have leisure for my Reuben's son? Think you I am not curious to hear what has happened to you, the sole inheritor of his name, and to learn what you know of your parents?"

I was perplexed. How often had I already in thought anticipated the situation and prepared fitting answers to all the questions I imagined he could put to me! And now my cleverness left me in the lurch, and shame at my deceitful position sent the blood coursing red hot to my temples. I looked back and saw again in my mind's

eye that deserted barn. Father lay upon the straw, his box of goods at his feet, his staff clutched convulsively in his wasted hands. I cowered at his side, a helpless lad, and dried with trembling hand the drops of moisture from his brow. It was a broiling hot day, the air close to suffocation, and round us was breathless silence. I listened eagerly for mother's steps; she had gone for aid; not a footfall was to be heard. She came not: I thought everybody in the land had died and the cruel disease would destroy us too in the barn—that cruel disease that coursed through the country and filled graves innumerable. “And mother will die too!” I cried in sudden terror, and rushed to the door; with the hot tears in my eyes. Father noticed my movement and called, “Samuel, where are you? Woe to me if you leave me!” I went slowly back.

“My son, do you at least remain with me. See, my hour has come. I am alone, with no one to recite the prayer for the dying, to pray with me, and no one to wrap my corpse in clean shrouds! Alas! will they put me with my ancestors? Will my son ever find my grave, my children's children be able to pray at my earthly resting-place? Mother, where are you? Sunk down by the way, strength has failed you—they have thrust you from their doors, my wife! and turned you from their farms! Samuel, where are you?”

“Here, father, at your side, quite close to you!”

“God punishes me in taking me away while you are young, my child! What will become of you? The *Goyim* (Christians) know no pity; they will chase you from them like a distempered dog. If you survive this misfortune, my darling, remember your uncle in Germany, he will be a father to you. You ask me why I left there, my son, left all my friends? My child, they have a law there by which only a certain number of Jews may reside in one town. True, I asked no help from any one but my own hands, but they drove me away—drove me away! Why do you weep? We are in exile; on account of our sins we were driven from the Holy Land. My son, I am an ignorant man, but your uncle is a great Rabbi, he will teach you *Torah* (the Law) and *Mishna*, but meantime promise me by my departing life to keep God's commandments and not to become a Christian! We crossed the sea and came to this country, England, because men are not so cruel here as at home. They let us live by our labor, do not kill us because we call on our God's

name, and do not despise us because we are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But be on your guard; they try to convert us. They are not wicked, only narrow-minded. They think if they lead a son of Israel from the right path, that they prove the truth of the Crucified One!"

In what chamber of my memory had these words been locked up? Why had I so seldom thought of my parents, and how was it that fearful scene rose so vividly before my eyes just then?

Poor, deluded nation! I cannot restrain my tears, and weep through the night's darkness at thy sad fate! Is it possible—can Providence permit that men shall make martyrs of themselves for a falsehood, and that generation after generation, with superhuman obstinacy, shall continue their fathers' madness? Close at their side hangs the fruit of grace, the stream of salvation flows near, and all the world's honors glitter at arm's reach; but they close their eyes and will not see, avert their ears and will not hearken; they sacrifice their ambition and choose to remain in insignificance—that wondrous, that fearful race of Judah! Therefore will I add my mite and work with all my strength for thee, for Fate has ordained me hereto!

The owner of the barn was not cruel, as my father had anticipated; he brought us some food; I rejected everything as I lay almost dying with grief by my dying father's side, and torn with anxiety for my mother: she did not return. How long this lasted, I do not know. I remember only running along the hedges later, and calling on father and mother—I dared not venture into the village. I crept along the road, for I was too weak to walk, and could not understand why my parents had left me; my sweet mother whose life I was, my good father who blessed me, and taught me to pray. In this manner I reached a handsome mansion—the house that was to receive the forlorn orphan. A kind gentleman looked out of the window and caught sight of the ragged boy on the road. Yes, my adopted father, you threw me a coin. I did not pick it up, I crept on farther, still weeping, and only halted when you called me repeatedly. You brought me in and made me tell my history, I supposed you had heard about it before, and knew that my parents were resting in the cold earth. You comforted the poor child, promised him he should see his dear ones again. You had meat and drink set before me,

but I would take only bread and milk ; for that the lad of five years old already knew, he must not partake of the strangers' viands.

I will not dare to remind you of your goodness ; may God grant that I may repay you as you wish, for all your kindness. You were a lonely bachelor, unaccustomed to children and their little needs, but you embraced the outcast with holy love, adopted him as your child and came to be more to him than father—teacher, companion of his soul ! Violently restraining my emotion at these recollections, I recounted to my uncle how a benevolent man in Berwick had adopted and educated me ; I told him all about you, with that one necessary reservation, and with the admiration I feel for you.

“The Lord will remember this pious man in the time of his need,” said my uncle, “for he has compassionated the orphan and rescued the outcast. Happy are you, my son, that you are sensible of his goodness and repay his love with veneration. But why did you not think of me earlier, and write to me sooner ? My brother's son belongs to me, and should grow up with mine.”

“That is what my father feared,” I answered smiling ; “he feared to lose me, and therefore it was only with difficulty, and because he thought it his plain duty, that he at length decided to write to you and give you news of my existence.”

“But you would not have been lost to him thereby,” replied my uncle. “You shall dwell for a time with me ; I too have a right in you. If you like it better over there, you may go back to England as soon as you choose ; you remain your own master and will not forget your foster-father's sacred right. But go now and rest awhile, your room is ready.”

As I rose he added, “One thing more, Samuel : you are of course a good Jew ?”

“I hope so, uncle,” I replied prevaricating.

“Perhaps you do not know in what sense we use the word here in Germany ; we understand thereby one who strictly adheres to the ceremonial laws.”

“Then, uncle, I am not a good Jew.”

“But in my house, my dear nephew, you must live as such.”

“*Must*, uncle ?”

“Otherwise, sorry as I should be, I could not receive you.”

“But, uncle,” I exclaimed, “how can you be so intolerant as to



demand that a man should accept customs which do not proceed from his conviction? You may consider the old yoke binding yet, but I, out of my own perception, have withdrawn myself from it, and you will surely not require of me such unworthy hypocrisy?"

"All that I ask, my child, is that you shall be one of us. But whether you repeat the daily prayers in your room, is your affair; but I request strict observance of holy-days and the dietary laws."

"Well, that I can agree to, although your demand seems somewhat strange to me in this nineteenth century. Is it not exactly the boast of our age that men have conceded equal rights to individual convictions, and that the voice of public opinion accordingly condemns him who dares to force his view, his will, on others?"

"Ha! you read the *Times* occasionally," said my uncle with dry humor.

"But I do not echo it——"

"Who said you did, my dear nephew? Now see: if I wished to tease you, I could say, You are a traveler, you come from the seats of culture, from nations who stand at the summit of civilization, into a small German town, into the secluded house of a Rabbi, who since his student years has held no intercourse with learned men; please be so kind as to have a little consideration for our conservatism in things which are harmless to you, and useful to us. But this I say," and he raised his forefinger, smiling pleasantly, "mind and be pretty cautious with an old man's prejudices, my dear Samuel; perhaps, if you are good, I'll give you a couple for an ornament."

"Oh! many thanks," I exclaimed laughingly, "I only rejoice that I am free from prejudices."

"There, I thought so," he said, nodding his head; "but answer me, you dangerous young man, will you live according to my proposal?"

"Well, all things considered, I shall not compromise myself thereby."

"Go to your room now; you will be called at dinner time. Rachel!"

My cousin came in and greeted me kindly. Her father bade her take me to my room. I followed her up one flight of stairs into a clean old-fashioned chamber, where I found my baggage already. Then I was alone and could ponder on my curious position at leisure. Good-by, dear father.

### LETTER III.

OCTOBER 5TH, 185-.

You will be glad to hear, my father, that I have become quite at home here, and pass my time usefully. I see already I have much to learn, and many views to modify. But things are not so bad as I anticipated first: these people are not so worthless as they appear; prejudice had sorely blinded even me, who am one of their race. My first lessons in Christianity inculcated detestation of the Jews: they had committed a most heinous crime, and therefore misfortune's curse clings to their footsteps. When I went to London, and passed by their poverty-stricken hovels in Houndsditch, their curious jargon and incessant gestures made me turn from them with contempt and disgust. I was thus early taught to associate the ideas of baseness and avarice with their very name, and I gradually accustomed myself to look upon the people as a species of Yahoos, as wretched caricatures of the Divine Image.

I remember a curious figure that once appeared on our village common, and attracted universal attention. It was a man in long Eastern garb, a turban on his head. Two long ringlets graced his temples, and an imposing beard reached to his breast; he was probably a Turkish or an Asiatic Jew. What a godsend for our boys! After staring a little, in an instant the whole mob were round him, hooting, shouting, capering; at one time closing in on him, and then running away again; hurling stones and keeping up an incessant howling: "*a Jew! a Jew!*" I stood afar off, too proud to take part in the uproar, but gazing with a sort of satisfaction on the stranger's terror, as at one time he stood still and addressed the boys with upraised hands, whereupon wild roars of laughter greeted him in reply, and how then he continued his way without regarding their attacks. "Why is he so obdurate?" I thought; "why does he so openly and defiantly proclaim himself an unbeliever to the world?"

To such a degree had the instruction I had received blunted my feelings; and yet that garb that they so derided, was the same that our Master of Nazareth wore: the beard, untouched by the razor, waved on *his* breast in the same manner. I wonder whether the Romans, clad in their togas and armor, made like sport of him! I scarcely think it. It is true, it is only here that I have learned it is no sin to retain the customs of our ancestors, and that one can be a good man even when wearing gaberdine and beard.

A great number of foreigners visit the Rabbi every day, and many poor people, for whom food and drink are continually being prepared. The most interesting to me are the Polish gaberdine-wearers. When my lesson with my uncle is over, and I want recreation, or perhaps after dinner, I go down-stairs where they are comfortably seated, reposing after the labor of eating, and conversing. They look very poor, but their garment is always of silk, and never torn; they are beggars, are called "*schnorrers*," but are quite different from our beggars. They are not rough, or ignorant, or riotous, nor are they drunkards. They are intelligent people who have enjoyed some education; indeed, their knowledge of Hebrew would put many a clergyman to shame. They speak a sort of corrupt German, but their words betray thought and even wit. They consider the alms that are given them as their right, and indeed the bestower does not regard his gift as actually meritorious; it is only his duty, because his brethren are poor and he rich. I understand now why in spite of all the poverty, there are no poor among the Jews. With us, there is not only an intellectual, but also a moral difference of culture, separating the upper and lower classes, because, among our people, the latter difference depends on the former. Our more refined manners protect us, like the wire-gauze protects the miner's light, from the brutality of the mob; our better knowledge teaches us to avoid vice because we are aware of its consequences. But among the Jews, a difference exists as regards intellect, but not as regards morality. The common *schnorrer* stands on an equal level of piety with the rich merchant whose purse is ever open to the poor. Often indeed is the latter excelled by the poor tradesman in the punctual observance of all religious ceremonies. If I seek the cause of all this, I only lose myself in a labyrinth of surmise and hypothesis. Verily, this people must be destined for a great future, when, even in the time of

its rejection, it preserves such valuable qualities which are lacking in more favored nations.

I love to make them recount the history of the sufferings which drove them away from their homes. They are mostly Poles or Russians, who have come hundreds of miles, going they know not whither; the benevolence of their co-religionists assures them not only traveling expenses and board, but, as I am told, they amass considerable sums from the alms they receive.

The other day I sat down next to a little Polish man, suffering from some eye-disease; he had come to Germany to seek medical assistance. I asked him how he liked the country. "The Germans are fortunate," he said. "What they earn, they earn for themselves. They have laws and a king: everything is orderly—yes, the Germans are very fortunate!" He meant the German Jews.

"How is it then with you?"

"Do not ask!" he cried. "Before I came to Germany, I thought it must be so. If I pass a *Goi* (Christian), it is only natural that he should strike me; if I meet the police, it is only a matter of course that they should rob me; when the soldiers come, it is only right they should drag off my child. See, yonder is a dog, but no one kicks it without cause. Leave me alone, young man, leave me alone!" and the tears ran down his white beard.

That is how they preach the Gospel to the Jews in Russia.

"Is it true," I asked, "that the late emperor was so harsh toward you?"

"A murderer!" he cried raising his hands to heaven. "A murderer! I will not curse him, for he was an anointed ruler; but he set his iron foot upon us and trod us into the dust, he crushed us, and if it had not been for God's mercy, he would have rooted out Judaism from Russia. He molested us so much: made laws how we should dress, how we should cut our hair and our beards, so that we grew weary of our life."

"Did you ever see him?"

"Yes; I was one of the deputation from the Jews in the year 1843. I happened to be then president of the congregation, so I went with. I saw him then. A handsome man, but haughty, alas! how haughty!"

"What was the deputation for?" I asked.



He looked at me in astonishment. "Do you not know that he decreed that all Jews in Russia and Poland should remove fifty versts from the Prussian and Austrian frontiers? Leave their houses, their synagogues, the graves of their fathers, and settle in a land already overcrowded with Jews?"

"Why was that?"

"Because some among us had been guilty of smuggling, his wrath descended on us all. In vain we offered that each community should assume responsibility for its members under severe penalties. It was in vain. Just as Nebuchadnezzar led our race away to Babylon, he dragged 200,000 of us from our homes!"

"And now he has died suddenly," said I, "on the very threshold of his wishes!"

"What sovereign has ever fared well," cried the old man, "that stretched out his arm against Israel? How could the Czar be prosperous when so many thousand mothers knelt and wept tears of blood before the Eternal; when so loud a cry of anguish went up from our synagogues? The soldiers broke into our houses at night, tore the lads naked from their beds, cut off their hair, and dragged them away into the interior of the country, where our eyes never saw them again. He put them into the military schools and drilled them for war; they learned to eat unclean food, to live like cattle; to despise their father and their mother, and bow down to gods of wood and stone. Should not the Lord destroy the dearest hopes of this monarch, who had sinned so grievously against him? God is just: he tore him from his course like a brilliant star; as Isaiah says:—'*How art thou fallen from Heaven, O morning-star, son of the dawn!*' He has turned his greatness to naught, to a mockery among the nations."

The Pole got up, and I did not question him more. Had they robbed *him* of a son? I went away with a heavy heart and ate nothing at table, for the tears fell from me incessantly. I excused myself on the plea of indisposition, went to my room, and wept over this unfortunate people. But amidst all my sorrow, there was a gleam of consolation: "One thing could have saved them," I said, "could have saved their dearest possessions, home and family:—*a few drops of water and a lie*"—but they *would* not lie. God be praised there are yet men who cling to truth, deem it holier than the dearest ties of family!"

## LETTER IV.

OCTOBER 12TH, 185-.

I HAVE devised a plan by which I can lead the conversation to the delicate topic as often as I choose. Yesterday, after we had studied a section in the *Gemara*,<sup>2</sup> explained and debated upon the doubtful points, I said to my uncle: "Rabbi, is it right that we do not dispute with the missionaries? They assert that although we support ourselves on arguments from our learned writings, their polemical contents are either little known or lightly esteemed. And so, when we are attacked, we are able to answer nothing."

He looked at me without saying a word.

"A missionary," I continued, "told me he had often visited a Rabbi for that purpose, but each time had been sent away from the door. At last, upon a written request for an interview, he had received his own letter back, upon which the Rabbi had written the words in Hebrew: The *fool* answers the *fool*!"

My uncle closed his book and said: "Did they ever dispute with you then?"

"I can not deny it," I answered. "You know the English are very pious, and try hard to make converts; they tried often enough with me. I thought I ought to take up the challenge for the honor of our religion, and I will not deny I was often at a loss, and even if I did not feel myself conquered, yet I was silenced. If you will permit me, I should like to put a few questions to you now and then; you will be able to clear up a good many of my doubts."

"What I think of your request," he answered, "you will soon see. But I am willing to give you all the explanation I am able, because you are a Jew. I, too, do not vouchsafe such to Christians."

I shook my head in wonderment.

"Shall the teacher learn wisdom from the scholar?" he resumed. "As long as they come to us and wish to instruct us, we can have

nothing to do with them. Believe me, all the disputation in the world never convinced any one. Only when the Eternal shall lead them, in His own wondrous way, to the perception of their folly, only then will be the hour when we may speak. Till that time, we wait, and wait patiently—until, as Zachariah says, ten men of the Gentiles shall lay hold of the coat of a Jew.”

“Alas!” I said, “we have already waited thousands of years in vain. I think, if we possess the truth, it is sinful to withhold it from our fellow-men.”

“You are young, my son,” he answered, “and I do not blame you; you have much to learn yet. But tell me, what use is it to point out the sun to a blind man? You may tell him, it illuminates the world, that from it we derive that light without which nothing would be seen—but you forget that he lacks the very first condition of belief in what you are telling him. Or would you perhaps bid him swear by the sun because *you* assure him of its light?”

“Certainly not,” I replied.

“Then we must wait till the cataract is ready for the surgeon. When the blind man’s eyes shall be open, and, full of shame at the fantastic absurdities of his brain, he begs for instruction, then is the time to speak. He who tries to make men happy against their will, gets small thanks. Was not Electricity as potent, centuries ago, as it is to-day? Was Steam less mighty? People did not perceive these forces because their eyes were too dull.”

“But, my dear uncle, that is just what the Christians think of us!”

“Let them! Does their thinking alter the real circumstances?”

“So we are to wait then until a miracle brings about the *dénouement*? Our great ancestors did not act as if they held this opinion.”

My uncle could not repress a smile, and looked at me with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes. “Well, Samuel, if *you* are to be the man, so be it, in Heaven’s name! You know we do not need to wait for a miracle: wonders happen every day. Whoever feels the divine spark in his heart, is at once a miraculous messenger of salvation to his people; and if *you*, my son, are to be this——”

“Mock away, uncle! You know I only claim to be an ignorant student, albeit an eager one.”

“Not by any means an ignorant one,” he answered, patting my shoulder; “on the contrary, you have learned too much. The man

in England let you study too much. He meant well, but he let you do like the nations do now : they study and study till they forget to think for themselves. All according to fashion ; formerly they used to study nothing, now they study too much. And because this has been the case with you, I shall have to converse about things of which I never speak to a Talmud-pupil, ay, never have yet dared to speak." And as I looked at him in astonishment, he added, "Because they know all about them, Samuel. An ordinary scholar of mine would laugh at the why's and wherefore's I have to tell you." And as I looked a little put out: "With you it is different; your friends have worked upon your reason unceasingly, as it is their wont, until your heart has grown weary and uncertain of feeling the truth. It is not your fault, my son ; depend upon it, you *will* attain certainty ; but foremost of all, in order to strengthen your heart, devote your life to the observance of the Law."

These words touched me on a sore point ; but without betraying it, I replied, "You too lay stress upon forms ; nothing but forms. Such outsideness is surely not requisite, good uncle ?"

'How old are you, Samuel ?'

"Twenty-five."

"Wait then till your blood has flowed some thirty or forty winters through your veins. It runs hot in you now, and you consider the seat of life so certainly the centre of gravity thereof, that morality governs you only from the very fact of its existence in your nature. Other motor agents will, later on, grow stronger in your organism ; and happy will you be then if custom and holy forms retain you in the good path ! Your Vicar of Wakefield is right ; in the common run, cunning is the only virtue that usually remains to us in old age. We must aid nature : it is an absolute necessity. He who neglects to do so, in art and science, remains a barbarian ; in religion, a Heathen."

"But, uncle," I exclaimed, "do not the Fetish-worshippers do this and yet remain Heathens ? And the Brahmins—and the Buddhists ?"

"Hold," he said, laughing, "did not artistic form exist before the Greeks ? And yet the Greek rightly rejected the attempts of others, and called them barbarous. Only to him did his heart reveal the type of truly artistic beauty ; the need of it had been felt before by older people. The Egyptian artist who formed the Fire-goddess with the cat's head : the Assyrian who created the colossal symbol of



the Bull with a human countenance : all drew from the same master-source from which the Apollo Belvedere sprang. Only it was not the Castalian.<sup>3</sup> So with us. We are the only nation whose heart has revealed the type of pure religious form. But who will care to deny that the dull Negro has some idea of it? There is only one Religion, just as truly as there is only one Art; and neither can speak of concessions!"

"As concerns the first part of what you said," I replied, "I can not dispute your reasoning, as it appeals to a greater experience than mine. But the second portion, I must confess, is not quite clear to me."

"Perhaps because you do not know in what sense I used the word 'revealed.' I do not mean thereby, the descent of the eternal God upon earth to reveal His will to man; for He speaks His mysterious language to every being, and every being understands Him. He bids the tiger go in quest of prey, and warns the gazelle to be watchful. He stretches His hand over the tiny worm in the flower's cup and over the whale sporting in mid-ocean; at His command, the planets whirl toward the sun, and at His nod, they retire. And shall the eternal Father, who carries the world in His arms, care for His planet children, for His animal children, and not for His other children, men? Lord God! they have blasphemed Thee, and thought they were praising Thee; but Thou lookest upon these madmen with patience!"

"If I understand you rightly," I said, "you would deprive mankind of even this last certainty of salvation. All that we believe is deception, and our own will is our God; where then is the Eternal or whom you speak?"

"*In you,*" said the Rabbi with flashing eye, seizing my hand, "in you! Do you not belong to the House of Israel? Does not the blood of Abraham run in your veins? Therefore are you appointed a revealer of the Eternal! He has written His will in your heart and in the fate of your people; you must fulfill it, in order that your brethren, the nations, may learn it. Others have a book revelation; all their wisdom is contained in words, to which those who need comfort ascribe supernatural origin. Their present is faded and dried up, and they support themselves on the dry leaves of the past, which they strive in vain to make fresh again. The Eternal, they say, appeared on earth at a time of need, and vanished again. Whither has He gone?"

Has He retired to the sun or to Jupiter ; or does He wander around in the limitless space of a gigantic fixed star ? Alas for these unfortunates who believe in the word revelation——”

“ You do not think——”

“ *Think ?* ” he repeated with a soft smile ; “ if you do not *feel* it, I have been talking in vain ! If it did not, long ago, draw you with mysterious power toward the ineffable ; if a soft whisper has not warned you all through life, not to cleave to earthly things ; if you have not instinctively felt delight in what is just, and antipathy for wrong, you are no true son of Judah ! ”

“ Oh ! I am, I am ! ” I cried, overcome ; “ truly I am ! Oh ! now I know why I suffered ! ”

“ Ay, you are, indeed you are, son of suffering ! Was there ever a Jew but had to weep secret tears, on account of contempt, mortification, slander ? And if we are no longer the recognized outcasts of society, *Hebrew vermin*, as the Great Frederick called us, we are still banished, still wilfully misunderstood. Do you see now, my son, why each Jewish child has more to bear than the Christian ? It is not an empty boast in our Festival-prayers——‘ Thou hast chosen us before all peoples ! ’ Yes. He hath chosen all the children of His covenant to be the supporters of mankind. But He is not unjust toward the other nations. According to His holy will, we have *purchased* this preference with sorrows such as no other people has borne. But we wrapped the purple mantle of office, with which He had invested us, close round our blood-stained heads, that we might weep undisturbed ; and even on our joyous festivals, when we stood joyfully before Him, through all our gladsome melodies that recalled the happy past, or sang of a joyous future, tones of sadness echoed ! ”

My uncle, you see, had misunderstood my ejaculation, but I dared not undeceive him.

“ Then the nations have nothing to do,” I said, “ but to believe ? ”

“ You have named the watchword of the new religion,” answered the Rabbi. “ It is Belief, Faith. The Jewish founder of that creed, and his disciples, probably used the Hebrew word *emunah*, with which we designate the essence of all religion, and which we might translate, Fidelity, Trust. This seems at least to be the sense of the Greek and Latin renderings, *Pistis* and *Fides*. The Græco-Roman world changed the word denoting a sentiment into one standing for a

mental conception. Thus Paul founded a church, it is true, though no religion."

"Is then faith a faculty of the intellect? Do we not read:—*Credo quia non intelligam?* (I believe because I do not understand.) And what difference do you make between religion and church? How can one exist without the other?"

"I will answer your last question first," he replied. "Religion I call doctrine as carried out in daily life, as displayed, towards God, in veneration; towards man, in the strict observance of enacted moral laws. As such, I recognize, for instance, Islam. The other creed has never got as far as religion: their doctrine is contained in books and in the mouths of their clergy: it has never become universal practice. The English and Scotch Puritans were exceptions, but they started from a Jewish standpoint. Some of its professors have carried out its doctrine, but the people possess only its name. The Clergy, nevertheless, have succeeded in erecting an external, highly artificial and mighty dominion over their conscience, or, at least, over society, and that is what I call *church*."

"But then laymen belong to the church too," I said.

"Yes, inasmuch as you can not conceive rulers without at the same time supposing the ruled," he replied. "And this leads to the answer to your other question. The Catholic Church is consistent when it draws a strict, material difference between Clergy and Laity. When the contents of dogmas oppose common experience and reason, it is necessary to place them under the watchful supervision of a caste possessing superhuman authority. If this be not done, reason will shatter those dogmas sooner or later. A doctrine that excludes reason, absolutely needs a class of priests. It was on this account, that the foundation of Protestantism was the beginning of the new faith's final destruction; its clergy sways in mid-air——"

"But what are you then, uncle?"

"I a clergyman!" he exclaimed in surprise. "Is that all you know of your religion? Thank God, we Jews have no Church and no Clergy. Even in the days of our nationality, the priests were only superintendents of the ceremonies, and not sole receptacles of the Law. I am a teacher, as my title indicates. The regard due to me is grounded on my deeper knowledge of the Jewish code. Every member of our congregation who equals or excels me therein, has equal or



better right to be heard. As to the divine service in synagogue, it is entirely under the direction of the community; every Jew is qualified to lead it, and if you would like to conduct to-night's service, you need only say so."

"No, I should scarcely be able," I replied; "I lack the necessary practice. But still, I do not clearly see what fault you find with Christianity; you yourself assert that religion is not an affair of the intellect."

"True. And it is just therefore that I blame its professors, when, like the Heathen, they are better provided with the religious sentiment than with its forms. They are still so weak as to swear by the words of their master, and think they satisfy the divine will when they cling to a few unintelligible propositions that must be learned by heart, not comprehended."

"But you will not deny," I replied, "that many Christians, especially since the re-discovery of the Gospel by the Reformation, have placed the essence of religion in sentiment, and only accept doctrines which oppose reason because they have become bound up with them by holy traditions, and because much more than sentimental ecstasy or high morality is necessary for religion. Many a mind, yearning for truth," I added, thinking of my own experience, "has wrestled with itself manfully until it has succeeded in clearing up its own obscurity, and with a bleeding heart, brought the sacrifice of its reason."

"Yes," he said, bending his head, "so spake too the women on the banks of the Ganges:—with bleeding hearts they cast their babes into the holy flood. And the pious servants of Moloch, too, laid their children in the heated arms of the brazen god, in humble submission to a higher wisdom. Woe, woe to you who bring offerings to the Eternal from the choicest gifts His goodness hath sent you!"

Light flashed through my brain, like summer-lightning through the dark night; I strove to hold it firmly, but it vanished, almost before it appeared—in despair I shook my head.

We were interrupted then, and I was glad to retire with the burden of my thoughts. So much was clear to me: I should have to renew the old struggle I had wished buried, renew it here—to what end? Suppose there *is* no end? I shudder—I wish I had not begun——



## LETTER V.

OCTOBER 20TH, 185—

I FEAR it is a failure, my father; would that this were all I fear! Be not angry with me if the long-cherished plan for which you educated me, is not carried out. Although——

I am so unsettled I know not myself what I am writing. My thoughts get lost before I can put them on the paper; I would not write at all if I had not promised you a letter at least once a week.

It is only a trial; you know we agreed it would not be more than a trial.

I had returned dangerously ill to Davies' Hall. Thank God, that I got as far. Let me dwell there a moment. I used to write you from Paris every week, did I not? Then too you had exacted the same promise. But when I returned—oh! I do not wish to recall your pain at my distorted features—no, to warm my heart with the recollection of having been so tenderly, so devotedly loved by you! Joyfully, yes, almost gratefully, you received me, repentant prodigal as I was. My mirror had to reveal to me my bloated features, not your loving eyes. But when I surprised you in your room, weeping, no, not weeping, but sobbing in heart-broken prayer for your wretched adopted son, my father, I was not only punished, I was crushed! Had I not swooned away, had not a raging fever chained me insensible to my bed, I could never have endured that burning self-reproach, I should have put an end to my miserable life! When I recovered consciousness, and watched your unceasing attention round my couch, I felt that I must live for your sake. Then with secret pleasure I watched my recovery—how sweet was that time of convalescence! It was worth undergoing a brain-fever. Released from my room, how sweet it was to stroll through the park on your arm! With what secret pleasure I planted my foot on the ground which a few days before I could not touch with a finger! Each zephyr kissed me as it

breathed on my cheek, the very birds sang greeting, each flower was a divine revelation of the beautiful! Then it seemed to me as I might hope again, and sweet foreboding thrilled my fluttering heart!

But was that the fitting food for my mind? You know, my father, that I am thoroughly convinced, all you ever did for me was with the purest intentions for my welfare; you know I can not doubt you, and you will not imagine I reproach you; but tell me, was the Bible the best food for me, who had but newly awakened; for me, in so delicate a frame of mind? The old Bible, perhaps, *but the Gospels too?* And you only read to me from these latter; we conversed only about them as soon as my health allowed.

Unable to think for myself, I had forgotten what I had formerly held, and I did not think of fresh reflection—I allowed myself to be lulled into a light species of ecstasy which pleased me right well. Capable of no other mental activity than emotion, it was my delight to give myself up to it entirely. I shed tears of agony over the sufferings of Jesus, tears of admiration and joy over his self-sacrifice, and over my own rescue, as I called it, and then I dreamed of a higher, a purely spiritual life, such as that of the Saints.

When you, in mysterious words, again and again found reason in my Jewish descent for a lofty mission; when you painted in glowing zeal the grace of my double rescue; how could I, just risen from a sick-bed, I who esteemed it a luxury to have no own will, refuse to recognize in all this a sign from above? Assuredly, I was called, unworthy as I was, to imitate the holy Apostles, to announce the Evangel to my people! Add to this, that I deemed such a vocation a great and noble one, and you will not wonder at my enthusiasm then. How your pious tears moved me, my father, when I announced my determination, and then you told me that such had been the desire of your life, the obscurely formed plan, when in pure humanity you gave the orphan boy a home.

But as my bodily weakness diminished, so too did what I was later forced to call my mental infirmity. The first time I rode out, I began to notice how my enthusiasm disappeared with my sickness. I saw then I had mistaken a transient delusion for a permanent truth. Understand me, father, I did not repent my determination, I do not say I repent it now; but I began to feel ill at ease whenever I thought of it.

I gradually recovered my former self, and artificial excitement gave way to my natural temperament. But with the former dominion of reason, all my old disquietude returned, so that I wished the days of my illness back again: they were the only ones in which I was happy. Yes, I reflected, Luther was right; reason is a seductive wench, able to arouse desire, but only apparently capable of satisfying it. A shadow in a coquettish mask. But yonder, they offer me everything I need, peace and trust, and if not through the medium of a self-evident truth, such as I desired, one which should light up my mind like a sun, be as a fixed and certain centre around which my unsettled ideas should become rigid; at all events it was a prop, it was *reliance upon another*. I had studied the authorities about *him*, and had made acquaintance with the German critical school; but their negative system had brought me only emptiness and cheerlessness. Well then, thought I, let us try the position in which so many find salvation. I will believe, because I must live—I will examine no more, because I wish to believe. Yes, let that personage, be he who he may, be *my* eternal light too; yes, you are right, father, it is foolish and too human to judge the Eternal by mortal measure. Where too, in the world of reality, could that harmony between idea and fact, which I imagined as the essence of the Deity and its manifestation, be actually found? Even the so-called exact sciences laid down rules only to infringe them by exceptions: *exception* is the rule of Nature, and shall this rule not hold in the highest instance?

Thus I shut my eyes—and *swore on the crucifix*. I had succeeded in reasoning myself back into the state of Grace from which my awakened consciousness had aroused me.

When I confessed my state of mind to you on the day before my departure—I sat in the writing chair in your study, and you were walking up and down, with your hands behind you—you said nothing, but shook your head thoughtfully. “Do you not feel a sentiment of sweet solace in believing in *him*?” you asked at last.

“Ultimately I do,” I replied. “But I am only persuaded, not convinced. A dark misgiving remains in my heart, which I can drive off, but not entirely expel, and which I must conquer in obstinate strife whenever it returns.”

“What misgiving, my son?”

"I fear I am placing my trust in a being as weak as myself and long since dead——"

"Unhappy youth!" you exclaimed. "The stiff-neckedness of your fathers has descended to you!"

"Is it my fault," I replied, feeling hurt, "is it my fault that I am what I am?"

Then you approached me and laid your hand lovingly upon my shoulder, "Go forth, my son, and make the trial. The Lord who hath preserved you will not forsake you. I do not think He has preserved the remnant of Jacob for nothing. If I blamed your stiff-neckedness, I know how to value it in the cause of truth. The stamp of Abraham's descendants can not be effaced. Go, my son, like your great ancestor, cross the water, not to flee from idols, but to carry the good tidings to your people. Remember you are free, my son, free to act according to your sincere conviction; whatever goal you attain, shall be welcome to me. I rely on the purity and fidelity of your heart as upon myself."

Those were your words.

"Then I will make the attempt," I exclaimed, "to found my life upon something dark and inconceivable, I will acquire confidence through work. Welcome the trial you have selected for me! If it be truly a holy weapon which I wield, I must conquer; if it be not, let it be shattered in my hand!"

I little thought it could turn against myself.

You ask how the trial has succeeded? Have I not said? If not, excuse my aching brain. But, you ask, what have you written to me then? If nothing else, at least a small token of my old love.



## LETTER VI.

NOVEMBER 1st, 185-.

I AM too easy, you write, and allow myself to be governed by new impressions. You say I ought to have commenced with the young, instead of with petrified old age; hear what I have done, and judge whether I have set to work without earnestness. But do not forget I know no higher duty than that of Truth; whenever and wherever Truth meets me, I am her slave. The appearance of success is indifferent to me, and the fame of being a renowned worker in the vineyard of the Lord would be a torment if purchased with my conviction.

Yesterday, just as my uncle had gone at his usual hour to the college which adjoins our house, my cousin Benjamin, who has left boarding school only a few weeks, came rushing into my room. His father, not wishing to educate him himself, for some reason unknown to me, had let him grow up in rural seclusion among lads of his own years. Perhaps he feared the influence of a city. The young man is now to study theology under his father's direction, and become a Rabbi. This is the father's wish; as to the son's you will learn from the following.

"Samuel," he exclaimed, slapping me on the shoulder, "I have two tickets; come along quickly, the old man has gone out."

"What are the tickets for, Benjamin?"

"For us, of course. Where is your hat? Come, the curtain rises at six, and it is already half-past five."

"Benjamin, you know your father does not like you going to a theatre?"

"He need not know it, dear Coz!"

"Is that right, Benjamin?"

"Now say yourself, Samuel, is there any sin in seeing a good piece? Ought I to starve because my father does not feel hungry? I am no longer a child. Besides, he has never forbidden it to me."

"But it does not harmonize with your future profession."

"All the more reason I should enjoy the present. Come, I have given my word to be there."

"To whom?"

"To her."

"Who is she?"

"Well, Julia. She plays to-night, and would never forgive me if she did not see me in the box."

"Benjamin, Benjamin, you will be sorry for it——"

"Go on, Mr. Preacher!"

"When your father learns——"

"That he was eighteen years old once?"

"Peace, cousin; let us talk earnestly. Do you love that girl?"

"That is a conscience-question, Mr. Father-confessor."

"And one which demands an answer."

"Well then, I believe I do."

"And what is to be the result?"

He stared at me with his handsome hazel eyes.

"Will you marry her?"

He burst out into loud laughter. "Really, Samuel, you are a funny fellow. I marry? And an actress?"

"Why not, if she is good and virtuous?"

"Well," said Benjamin, walking self-complacently up and down, "I have never thought of that."

"But then you can never become a Rabbi."

"Never, never! Shall I bury myself alive like my father? I wish to enjoy my life."

"Cousin," I said, looking at the clock, "it is time for evening service."

"Why do you not pray then?"

"Because I do not think it right to bind myself to times and forms."

"You have uttered my own most secret ideas," he exclaimed. "Up till now, I could do as I chose. Our teacher in the country was old, and we were too big for him to manage; and here I find I have to begin the old nonsense over again."

"But your father, Benjamin?"

"I love and honor my father, but I am a free agent. He is good and noble, but narrow-minded. Because he has grown accustomed

to the old rusty armor, must I creep into it too? I will live according to my age, will learn and enjoy, but will not yield to worm-eaten observances, which are worn-out and no longer suited to the times."

Had not the spirit of the age breathed over our Benjamin's secluded rural solitude too? What remained for me to do here? Was he not already one of us?

"While I can not find fault with your views," I answered, "I wonder that you can find peace in such a contradictory state." He looked at me in astonishment. "If you feel yourself free," I continued, "and yet go with the yoke around your neck, are you not then a hypocrite? Are you not deceiving your father, and, what is worse, that Supreme Being whom you pretend to reverence and yet mock?"

"But what shall I do, Samuel?" he replied, uneasily. "Advise me what to do."

"Either not to tread that path, or to follow it to the end."

"Hush!" he said, pointing mysteriously to a small curtain on the wall. I had often noticed it before, and thought it concealed one of those little windows that are to be found in old-fashioned houses.

"What is it, Benjamin?"

He glanced around, opened the door to see all was clear, and then quickly pushed a chair to the wall and drew back the curtain. A bright boy's face gazed at me with scintillating eyes, from a dark walnut frame. "Who is that?" I asked, surprised.

"Hush!" and he let the curtain fall again over the picture. "That is my elder brother: *he is an apostate*. His name may never be mentioned in this house. Only once a year, on the great Atonement-day, is that picture uncovered; he himself dares never see his father's face more."

I stood as petrified.

"And now," said Benjamin, with the happy gayety of his years, "now, Samuel, it is time. Let us start immediately, lest I incur the displeasure of my queen."

He drew me with him, and I acquiesced in order to increase my influence over him. We went arm in arm to the theatre.

"I say, do I look Jewish?" asked Benjamin on the way.

"What difference does it make?"

"First answer my question."

"Well, you have, it is true, the curved nose and the dark color of our race, but in your manner there is a certain——"

"Well?"

"I know not how to call it: perhaps self-consciousness, which deceives the observer."

"And by Jupiter, I mean it too. I detest carrying the stamp of the race on my forehead."

"Benjamin, what do you mean 'by Jupiter'?"

"Pooh, I do not want to be taken for a Jew. Every man is taken at his own price, but we are condemned at the first glance to be considered as spurious coin. With all others, people wait to see whether they prove of noble or base metal: we are marked and stamped beforehand."

"You are unjust, cousin."

"I wish I were," was the bitter reply. "Consider our social life and judge for yourself. The Christians either consider themselves too good to associate with us, or they treat us with impertinent reserve. Look at the stage. There is not a farce in which a Jew is not held up to laughter and ridicule. I do not blame them. I shudder myself when I hear the jargon. But I can not avoid it: when I come home and see the old humbug being enacted with the most earnest mien in the world, and see my father, whose talents fit him for the highest honors, toiling along under the senseless yoke with all his dignity, I feel as if I should go mad."

"I do not understand you, Benjamin. The hatred I can comprehend: it is intelligible, at least. But the ridicule—what is there to laugh at? Is it founded upon the fact that the irreligious in their benightedness generally laugh at the religious? Let them: should we not pity fools who ridicule what they do not understand?"

"And as for our curious gestures and shocking jargon, are they not the marks of their ill-usage and our own firmness under it? They are marks that have maintained themselves through whole centuries despite foreign influence, and for that reason are venerated by all true Christians."

"Yes, yes, you are right," said the young man. "We are accursed whichever way we take it. Well, here is the theatre; let us forget who we are for a few hours."

The theatre was brilliantly lighted, and filled with a numerous and



genteel audience. We were in a small proscenium box, where we could survey both spectators and actors at our leisure. The acting is quite different from ours. The German player possesses, so far as I can judge, a sense of dignity which does not allow him to exaggerate passion; he knows how to embody the poet's idea in the appropriate manner, and is without that eccentricity which does not desert the Englishman even upon the stage. I can understand now, how, in a country which lacks public life, as well political as religious, worthy men seized the idea of using the theatre as a moral instructor. Except the pulpit, this is the only place where a man can address his fellow-citizens, even though it be only through the mouth of a third party. But then, how must he disguise, ay, distort, what he has to say, in order to give it a presentable form, nay, in order that he may obtain *permission* to say it at all!"

Occupied with these thoughts, I had paid little attention to my companion, who seemed to follow the tragedy with rapture. It was Schiller's "Love and Intrigue." "Samuel," he said at length during a pause, "do you think poets tell falsehood?"

"I think they do," I answered, smiling.

"For shame!" he replied. "You do not mean to say that what drives that innocent couple upon the stage to destruction, while hundreds here watch their fate with beating hearts, is all sheer nonsense, invented by the sportive poet as a sort of airy phantasmagoria, a *fata morgana*, deception without any substance? Is not love a high and holy sentiment, worthy to rule over our lives?"

"Certainly," I replied, touched. "Love is the highest and most powerful agent on earth and in heaven—but——"

"You confess it yourself!" he interrupted. "You, whose courage and zeal father holds up as an example to me! Oh! why is that religion of Love and Grace not truth! How joyfully would I then accept it!"

"Who says it is not truth?" I exclaimed.

"What, do *you* believe in it, Samuel? Oh, then I see, the old hallucination can not longer exist: we have outlived ourselves. The eyes of the young generation are being opened, and they hold to the ancient ideas only out of respect to humanity. But is it right, dear Samuel, that our elders should exact from us this sacrifice?"

"As long as we are not quite clear in our new ideas, certainly it is."

"Yes," he said sadly. "Quite clear—that is it. Alas! why is the most beautiful system of faith interwoven with such nonsensical dogmas?"

"Nonsensical, Benjamin? But stop, this is not the place for such discussion."

"Yes, it is!" he cried vehemently. If you can give me truth, any time and any place is proper. But perhaps it is better we go out now. Come, I am tired of being held on the rack by all that intriguing yonder; they are going to poison each other, I know all about it, and the audience will go home melancholy."

We left the theatre and went into the streets, which were as empty as in the early morning at home.

"Now, Samuel, I adjure you," said my cousin passionately, "do tell me, without reservation, the true state of your mind, your honest conviction. Do you really think the Christian religion better than ours?"

I had too often considered this question, not to be ready with an answer. "Are you a just man, Benjamin?" I asked.

"What do you mean?"

"Do you consider yourself, asking your own conscience, a just man as our Law demands of us?"

"I am but a worm in the dust!" he answered agitated; "who is just before God?"

"If justice then can not be acquired either by good deeds or by ceremonies, it is a dream, a delusion, and there is nothing left but grace."

"Yes," he repeated, "there is nothing left but grace."

"And who is gracious but the Eternal Love?"

"Yes," he said softly, "the Eternal Love! That is a sweet reflection, Samuel. Love preserves me, preserves the whole universe. Love permeates all beings and winds itself, like a holy chain, round all the children of earth!"

"But, Benjamin," I cried, terrified at the outcoming of his ideas, "Love is personified by the Deity!"

"Who is this Deity, Samuel? Do you understand that curious mystery?"

"Understand? Do you understand love? Would it not be a miracle if it *could* be understood? Religion is not the subject of reason: we must believe, and belief is happiness."

"Does it really bring happiness? Where is it to be had then?"

"It brings it sometimes, I know, and faith itself is said to be an effusion of the Divine grace, which accords it to him who yields himself to it entirely."

"Well, I can not help it," he said, "but I can not get over this point. It seems to me ridiculous, that I should beg God to grant me faith in Himself! Why do I pray to the Deity if I had not already faith in Him?"

"Did you ever comprehend a new foreign language," I asked, "all at once, or did it cost much labor and tedious study? Will you seek then to penetrate this highest of all matters in a few minutes?"

"You are right," he answered. "But the *three Gods*?"

"Fool!" I exclaimed. "Dare you repeat the words of the mockers? The Christians believe in one God too. That is exactly the greatest miracle, that this God assumed human form, and in order to save them, bore their sufferings, and——"

"Stop!" he cried. "You are blaspheming, Samuel! Sin not against the name of the Most High! When you tell me that God is all-embracing love, I have some sort of idea of what is meant, though perhaps, not a clear conception; but when you say that that Eternal Being, who is enthroned on the glittering icebergs, and at whose breath oceans tremble; that the Infinite, who extends through the loftiest empyrean, and before whom our earth is but a grain of sand; when you tell me that He was born, a naked, helpless infant, of a mortal woman, I tell *you*, Samuel, you *blaspheme your God!*"

Do *you* give an answer to that, my father! I was speechless before the boy, whom I had not credited with such depth of religious feeling. My heart commenced to beat uneasily.

"Why are you so silent, Samuel?" he asked after a pause.

"I am thinking whether you can be right, Benjamin, when I see how the general opinion of all civilized nations is adverse to yours. They have all accepted Christianity: is that only *accidental*? Why has not one of the intelligent Indo-German nations taken another course? It is only among these that we see a steady, undeniable progress: the boasted civilization of the Arabs has stopped short suddenly. It is only among the former race that order and higher morality prevail, while Heathendom—look only at India and China—is on the verge of dissolution, and Islam has outlived itself. Christianity, on the other hand, spreads and grows mightier every day;

besides Europe, America and Australia own its sway, and even Asia begins to yield before it. A short time yet, and it will rule over the whole earth; and is not history the verdict of God?"

"That I grant," replied the young man. "I accept these facts and their conclusions, but pray do not speak to me more of those old women's tales. Love and Grace shall be my *Ægis*. And now good night, Samuel."

"Good night?" I exclaimed, astonished. "Are we not going home together?"

"Not to night," he said hesitatingly. "I have long begged her for a token of her affection, and in vain—but to night—she—she—in the theatre she sent me this key——"

"Cousin," I said earnestly, "do not go! Think of virtue and come home with me!"

"Which virtue?" he replied, laughing roguishly.

"You are a mocker," I exclaimed, angrily, "and I will have nothing more to do with you!"

"Not so angry, cousin of mine. Tell me, Samuel, have you not yourself just been preaching love? I want to know now what love is; let me ascertain it practically; you just extolled eternal Grace as the law of the universe, well, I want to claim some of it. Is not the repentant sinner more welcome than the upright who has not sinned? Let me go and sin then, repentance will come at the proper time. Good night, dear Coz."

Was he mocking, was he in earnest? I know not. I hastened after him to detain him, but he had disappeared in the darkness and the winding lanes.

There you have what I have achieved. I am in my chamber; it is late, but I do not care to go to bed, so I am writing to you. My heart is heavy in my bosom. Why did you lay this load upon me, father? Give me back my freedom; I am too weak to bear the fate of these people: I can not support myself. I had covered my wounds, forgotten them, thought them closed, and now they open again and burn worse than ever. I should like to steal to the door, unheard by any one, slink away from the house, disappear as if I had never been here—if I could thereby eradicate the traces of my presence. O father, I am not the man you hold me to be; I sink under my task, my very heart rebels against me, and every minute I am alone, it



racks me with hideous torture! Yes, *I will*: to-morrow I will go to the Rabbi and tell him a hypocrite has forced himself into his house, that deceit has glided under a specious mask to his fireside, and poisoned the peace of its noble occupants. I shall sink to the ground in shame and confusion, but I shall have satisfied my conscience. Cursed be Truth, if that be her fruit: I will be simple as the dove, but *not* cunning as the serpent. And therewith I quit the service of Him who I thought sent me: I am not suited to perform his behests!

The neighboring church-tower strikes two. Benjamin has not come home yet. I am excited and dread to go to sleep, for fear of bad dreams. I will look among my papers; perchance I may find something there to soothe me.

A carefully sealed bundle comes into my hand. They are the letters of that woman who loved me as much as any woman ever loved man; and I have forsaken her. Why does not my heart beat violently, and why do I feel no sense of compunction? I thought I loved her, and as I told her so, she swooned. It was a lie; I did not love her. From that hour, our intercourse was purely conventional; I made the bitter discovery that I had adored an idol fashioned by my own hands. She lived only in me, beautified what I held beautiful, rejected what I despised. But the chord that vibrated so loudly in her, roused no echo in me—cursed be that lie! Truth, truth! is she nowhere to be found? I drove the poor girl from me, I even preferred being cruel, to being a slave to a lie. I knew she would have no word of reproach, that she would take her fate as deserved, ay, would bless the hand that dealt her death-blow, because it was mine—and I drove her from me. My heart is full of grief and melancholy: if there is aught of vanity in it, may the Almighty's thunderbolt shatter me!

Malediction on that love which plays such part in your poems, your drama and your novels! The men who are alone extolled as inspired by the Deity, feed our youth upon such stuff; we repeat the words after them, believe them, live in them. We grow up and desire to make a trial; our young senses, wearied of mere ideas, demand reality. Then the deception with which the cruel poets have plied us, becomes evident. They have reversed nature. Man has disappeared from the world and Venus is the earth's goddess. Adorn her with all the graces of your exuberant fancy, make her lofty, holy,



lay all your heart's longings at her feet, she remains a goddess, an idol, and if you translate her adoration into earthly language—a woman!

They had bewitched me too, and blinded me; I too held woman and her love to be the only desirable things in life. Do not all those who speak thus, and seem to live thus, know that it *is* a lie? Why then do these wicked hypocrites, who possess experience, babble to each other, and allow the innocent to run into the snare and perish? Out upon this abominable life of ours! It is corrupt, it is rotten: animal propensity is deified, while Nature's lofty aim is ignored. Wearied by the emptiness and sterility of sentiment, man seeks truth in sensual enjoyment, and the maiden, stripped of veneer, lowers herself to a degrading hunt after a husband!

I am standing now by the window, gazing long into the peaceful night; surely a portion of its peace will enter my troubled heart——

Just outside the window there is an apple-tree, and as the night breeze sighs softly through its branches, silently and steadily it is progressing toward its appointed aim, and develops in dutiful subservience the gifts the Almighty has endowed it with. It bears fruit which others consume, and even if you do not take them from it, it retains them not. The fierce sun scorches it: it waits patiently for the cool night. Then winter comes and strips it of its leafy finery, and it stands there like a worn-out broom the servant has thrown away. Snow heaps up on it and the frost gnaws its bark. In pain it shrinks together, and its life seeks shelter in the roots in the dark earth. There it stands, hoping, longing for spring that shall melt the ice, and bring the warm sun to shine upon it, causing the sap to mount in plenty to its branches that shall spread themselves joyfully with renewed courage, with renewed strength.

And shall I not hope too? And will not He who hath implanted in me this fervor for Truth which has made me renounce all peace—even when I laid my head on her supporting shoulder, Thou didst affright me and drive me thence! and I have sacrificed all—and naught remains!

I am standing bewildered, as if my heart were broken; but I will bear the apple-tree in mind that waits for its winter to depart. I too will wait for my winter to pass away. O God! let me not perish by this chilling frost meanwhile, and let me be convinced at least that there *is* a glorious spring-time, even if I do not live to see it!

## LETTER VII.

NOVEMBER 8TH, 185—.

You fear my unreflecting impetuosity, and warn me against despairing of success too readily. You remind me that I must be prepared to encounter obstacles, and point out the tendency of over-sensitive natures like mine, to torture themselves with scruples and uncalled-for qualms of conscience. All this I have revolved in my mind, and decided not to give up the struggle spiritlessly.

The bright morning had dispelled the night's dark delirium. As I opened my eyes, I noticed that the sun was already high in the heavens. Its rays can shine into the courtyard only in summer, and we are having, they tell me, an unusually early winter; it is colder now than in England in January. I jumped up, not without a sense of pleasurable anticipation for the day. My studies, my uncle's conversation, and Rachel's chats afford me much enjoyment; I begin to love life again.

Truly, I was silly last night, very silly. Why look at a youthful folly with the same eyes as at a funeral? Who in his time has never been captivated by some pretty face? Is it wonderful that a pretty child should look with favor upon an impetuous youth? Who would have been foolish enough to repel her? Is it not a wise old saw, that just those who have been most virtuously and most secludedly brought up, yield most easily to temptation? "It is better to acquire experience early than late," I said to myself as I dressed.

In spite of these sage reflections, the more I pondered upon the agitation of the night, the more steadily I experienced a feeling of uneasiness in a little corner of my heart, without being able to assign any specific cause for it. The truth was, I did not even care to try to ascertain it; I left my room to go and see after my cousin,

I knocked several times at his door, but obtaining no answer, I

went in. "Hush," said the old servant who was kneeling before the stove, making the fire, "Master Benjamin has not woken up yet."

"I will wake him then."

"No, not yet. A little sleep is always wholesome."

"Indeed?" said I, "then I will wait," and I sat down on the edge of the bed, and watched how the old woman split the wood—they use wood here yet!—with trembling hands, and pushed it cautiously into the black tile-stove as if the pieces would break, so gingerly.

"Say, Taube, it must be true what people say about you, that you and this young man are very close friends."

"Of course it is true!" and her wrinkled face strove to laugh, whereby it did not at all improve its beauty.

"There you sit on the ground for half an hour, and take such care not to make a noise, in order that this lazybones here, who ought to have been up long ago, shall not be disturbed, and when you come to call me, you shout like a licensed vender."

"But then he is only a child yet, Mr. Samuel!"

"A fine child indeed!" said I; "just look at him."

In truth he was a handsome fellow. He had half thrown off the feather-coverlet which is in general use here, and his bare breast seemed well fitted to bear his massive head. Beneath the high forehead, his eyes were closed and veiled all within; his delicate cheeks were slightly flushed, and around his mouth there played a sweet line as of Love and Pity.

The old woman rose lightly and walked on tiptoe to the bed, where she raised the falling pillow and covered her favorite with all a mother's tenderness. "He likes old Taube too," she whispered to me, nodding confidentially all the while. "They all are very good toward me: Master, and Miss Rachel, but he is my own, own sonny. And my poor dear mistress too, God bless her, he was the apple of her eye. You see he was a weakly child, and his dear mother never slept a wink the first three years with him. He was restless and cried, and then she would get up and walk up and down with him till he was quiet again. At last she grew weak, weak enough to drop. But the child throve well, and she recovered too. Well, it was a Sabbath morning; she was a very religious lady and never missed *shool* (synagogue) on a Saturday; she was sitting in the front room, putting on her handsome yellow silk dress, and I was standing

there helping her—I shall never forget it as long as I live, it seems to me as if it were to-day—there comes the postman and brings her a letter, and as she glances at it and lays it aside, she sees it is the handwriting of her eldest son, who was then—let me see—yes, fifteen years old. She began to tremble all over, and because it was Sabbath, she asked the postman to open it for her, and he does so; she just looks at it like, and falls down like a log of wood, and I, more dead than alive, carry her off to bed, and there she remained. For six weeks she lay like a lamb, never stirring, and she knew it was her death-bed, for the greatest doctors couldn't help her; but when they brought her child to her—it was Benjamin here——”

The good old creature wiped her eyes with her apron, and shuffled back to the stove, where she commenced to blow the tardy flame anew with all her force. I walked up and down the room, thinking, “There lies now that mother's care; there he lies with flushed cheeks. What is he dreaming about? The strange woman's bright eyes fill his mind asleep and awake; he has forgotten her who bore him in pain. She who had held him close to her all his life, lies now under the cold ground. She had the pangs, others have the pleasure. Oh! sacred love of mothers! Unjust Nature! We sow and others reap, and the fruits of life that support us, we dare not ask whether they were planted by friend or enemy. Before we reach self-consciousness, the ideas of the age form our minds for us. We *must*—that is the final reason of things!

Therewith I turned around and stood suddenly before old Taube, who was about to leave the room with the water-ewer. She started and let the vessel fall with a crash.

“*Lemazel!*”<sup>4</sup> stammered the old woman, gazing ruefully on her feat.

“*Mazel tov!*” was the echo from Benjamin's bed, with a hearty laugh. “For shame, cousin; is that the way you wake people up?”

“I did it,” said Taube, piteously.

“Nay, Taube,” said I, “confess the truth, that I accidentally pushed you.”

“Really now, did you, Mr. Samuel?” She looked at me puzzled.

“Yes, I turned suddenly and struck your arm. And as I am the author of the mishap, it is only right I should remedy it,” said I, and handed her a dollar.



"Well, I don't know," said the old servant, getting more puzzled; "you certainly did turn around very suddenly, and so may have touched my arm, and I do not often break things myself"—here Benjamin winked mischievously at me—"but I won't take your money, Mr. Samuel, it is only a trifle, and what would Miss say——"

"Hallo," said Benjamin, sitting up in bed, "I see my sage cousin and Taube have got into a combat of good nature, out of which only I can help them. Hear, therefore, my sentence. Take the cash, Taube, dear old Taube, but spend it for the common weal, and get us something good for breakfast."

The old lady assented smilingly, took the money, and left us alone. Benjamin lay back again and closed his eyes. I went to the bedside; a happy smile played around his lips.

"Well, well, Benjamin, are you not ashamed——"

My pathetic appeal was cut suddenly short by his jumping right out of bed, and hugging me before I could prevent it. "She loves me, she loves me!" he cried.

"Stop, stop, are you crazy?" I remonstrated, scarce being able to defend myself against his caresses.

"She loves me, she loves me!" he shouted, springing around the room.

"But dress yourself, Benjamin; then speak like a sane person."

"How *can* I remain sane?" said he, stopping suddenly.

"Then I had better go," I answered and turned toward the door.

"You cross cousin, you! Stop, and I will do all you tell me."

He hastened to the washing-stand. "That good-for-nothing Taube," he exclaimed; "she has broken the pitcher, and I have no water."

"Dress then meanwhile; she will come back."

"I can't dress till I have washed; I have been used to it since my childhood."

"Well, then I'll fetch you some water. Taube has filled my ewer already."

"No, Coz, I won't have that!"

"What, going to make compliments in your night-shirt?" and I brought him my pitcher.

"Cousin," he said, grasping both my hands, "you are a good fellow!"



"What next?" I cried, jeering, "now he is touched!"

He turned from me, and I saw a tear in his eye. "Why, Benjamin, you are like a silly girl: you are hurt by a harmless joke!"

"No, not hurt; but, Samuel, please—please, do not always be so jeering, it is——"

"Well, speak out, man!"

"It is not worthy of you," and he cast his eyes down.

"You are right," I answered; "it is a bad habit."

"You see, Samuel, I know not how it comes, but I have more confidence in you than in any other man; I can open my very heart to you, but when I see that cruel, mocking smile around your mouth, words fail me suddenly, and I feel as if I could cry——"

Now it was my turn to be touched. "You know, Benjamin," I said, "in foggy England we easily get the spleen, as you call it: that is——"

He shook his head. "No, Samuel, it is not that. Something weighs on you, which you tell no one. It frets me terribly when I think of it, and I often do, because——"

"Because you are a funny fellow, and I have to drag every word out of you!"

"No, because I love you, Samuel!"

"Stuff!" I rejoined. "People do not love those whom they do not know well."

"How can I help it," he exclaimed, as if excusing himself. "At first I could not bear you at all, cousin, you were so stiff and cold; but I used to be always thinking about you, I was drawn to you: I struggled against the impulse; I passed your room-door twice and three times before I had courage to enter. But when I was there——"

"Benjamin, I would allow you to continue the catalogue of my shortcomings, if I were not afraid that you would catch cold. So make haste with your toilet, or I shall get angry."

He obeyed. He washed in cold water, dried himself, arranged his wet hair, and said with serio-comic air:—

"Behold, now my passion has passed. Now I am a sane man again. Yesterday——"

"Not a word, until you are dressed."

He sat down, drew on his stockings, sighing, and said:—

"You are an unmitigated barbarian, a raw beef-steak!"

Some one knocked. "Come in, Taube!" The old servant put her head in at the door and asked where we would breakfast. "Downstairs, eh! Samuel? But come here, Taube," said Benjamin. "I want to make you a present, what will you have?"

"Go along with you, Master Benjamin, it is not my birthday to-day!"

"I know that, Taube; you never have birthdays now, for certain reasons. But do tell me what you would like; I wish to give you something."

"Well then, give me your week-day neckcloth, it will make me a *Shabbos* (Sabbath) scarf."

"There you have it, then, Taube," he answered, with a pleased countenance; "take it, and wear it out in health!"

"Amen!" said the old woman, "thank you, my son!"

"Do you know, Samuel," he said when she had gone, "do you know—for now I suppose I may be permitted to address your high-and-mightiness—do you know I feel to-day as if a new sun were shining in the heavens, as if I were breathing a new atmosphere, so full is my breast with happiness? I could scarcely restrain myself from kissing old Taube, and I should have hugged you a thousand times, if you had not looked as if you would eat me up!"

"The weather commenced to be fine," I said, looking through the window, "but now it is getting cloudy."

"How can the morrow come after to-day? How can to-day come after yesterday? I can not conceive how the world can wag on!"

A curious emotion overcame me. Old sensations, aroused by the force of example, rose in me and mingled with new ones I could not have thought possible. I strove to laugh, but could not; I wanted to look jeering, but felt how my features drew themselves together as if in melancholy. I thought of that spring time—yes, let me confess my weakness—I thought of *her*. How I strolled with her in the garden just after winter time; with what glee she hailed the first flower that sprang up at our feet, and how she gave me the cherished blossom. Then my heart was aglow, but that is all long since. It has grown cold now, ice cold; and yet—and yet it disquiets me now too. How I wish some skillful surgeon would take the torturing demon from my breast and put in its place a firm, calm stone. I would never change back again, like the stupid clown in the German

fairy tale. Yes, it is an inhuman wish, but I find my humanity gives me a great deal of trouble. I obeyed that secret voice, I hardened my heart against the unhappy girl—I had other things to do than to marry—foolish! foolish! I am no farther now than then, and certainly anything but happier!

“Samuel,” said Benjamin, laying his arm round me in his tender manner, “my good Samuel, what is the matter with you?”

“Nothing, nothing, only woolgathering,” I replied, starting; “why did you not rouse me before? It is not right that our dreams should persecute us even when awake.”

“What dreams, Samuel?”

“Do not ask to know them, they will not amuse you.”

“But Coz, dear Coz, it is not for myself that I want to know your sufferings.”

“Well, old fellow, you *shall* know all; dreams come from the stomach, it is said, and my stomach has certainly enjoyed leisure enough.”

“I am only waiting for you, Samuel; breakfast is ready long ago, I dare say.”

“You surely are not going to eat anything, Benjamin?”

“Why not? On the contrary, you shall see I am going to eat a good deal!”

“A lover, as a rule, never eats.”

“Then I am a lover against the rule; I am almost afraid I am!” he said with a half-sigh. “Come along, Coz.”

## LETTER VIII.

NOVEMBER 15TH, 185-.

WHEN I came home yesterday and passed by my uncle's door, I heard the low cantillation in which the Holy Books are recited. Struck with the sound I listened at the door. Yes, it was my uncle's voice. So enlightened a man, thought I to myself, shaking my head, and yet so behind the times. Why can he not study without speaking, and speak without singing?

I entered. Uncle nodded to me to sit down, and continued his reading; I took up a book and waited. It was a long time before he finished. I left off reading and listened. He had the German pronunciation of Hebrew, so that I could understand but little; but I listened to the rough gutturals as in a dream. It seemed to me as if I were listening to some strange song—pardon the idea—a strange, mystic song that I once had heard and long, too long forgotten. The mournful, almost wavering, yet withal energetic tones sounded to me like some secret incantation, like some mystic spell containing the secret of my life. Alas! who could solve it?

Thus, my dear father, was your matter-of-fact son, who despises all sentimentality, moved by the mumble of a Talmudist holding forth, it may have been, about some dietary law! Life is sober, father, very sober: let me be like the pauper who can not get wine, and seeks excitement in gin. The delusion, if a mere dream deserves this name, does not last long!

When the Rabbi has finished the chapter, he closed the folio, and replacing it among the rows of huge books which lined the walls, turned to me and said: "The sun has gone down, Samuel, and the cozy hour of twilight gives a little leisure. We have neither time nor inclination to take up any absorbing study just now, so we may as well chat about some of the questions you have asked me, especially as the children are not present."



"Exactly what I wish, dear uncle, so I will begin at once with one of the most opportune. How can a learned man, a thinker, like you, devote his life to work which evidently is only such in appearance, and be satisfied with customs and habits which have only the semblance of good deeds? How can you continue to perform ceremonies which your reason must long since have rejected, and how can you bow down before mere Talmudists, whose general education would not entitle them to be your scholars even?"

I paused then, for I saw clouds gathering on the Rabbi's forehead.

"Have you finished your speech, Samuel?"

"Oh, I have a great deal more to say——"

"Samuel, let what you have said be enough for the present," he interrupted me, with a smile that brought a flush of resentment to my cheek. "Now hear me. I hold that man to be dangerous who has no prejudices: so I prefer retaining mine. Among them is one, that elders and teachers ought to be treated with respect. This weakness, I will readily believe, you, in common with the rest of our sage youth, have overcome; but if you wish to hold intercourse with me, you must please feign it."

"By heaven, uncle, you judge me wrongly!" I exclaimed, seizing his hand; "I may have erred in the form of my expression, but I certainly meant no ill."

"I believe you," he said, looking into my eyes; "but hear me further, my son. Never deride a man's profession in which you see him working with all his soul. Never, never, when the derided one, like your own uncle," pointing to his head, "has grown gray." It might happen that you were in the right, and then you would have *'shed the blood of thy brother!'*"

"Secondly, my son, do not hope to take men's hearts by storm, with your English style of questioning; commonplace people ask a great deal—that is commonplace. Your wise questioner, Samuel, neither presumes that he knows already what ought to be, nor does he demand point-blank. The experienced physician watches the sick man long before he pronounces upon his ailment. Thirdly, were we to talk about your doubts or was it mine? Has my old brain deceived me, and have I transposed the persons?"

"No, no, dear uncle," I exclaimed, "and I will not leave you till



you have pardoned me for those presumptuous thoughts which carried me away!"

"You received my pardon, Samuel, as soon as you asked for it. But enough now, let us get to business."

"Well, uncle, tell me if you do not think it prejudicial that we stigmatize as utterly ridiculous every attempt at converting us? Granted, of course, we have the truth; but if that is so certain that doubt thereof would transcend all reason, how is it there are such people as Christians and Mohammedans? How easily can it be thought—and what other faith does *not* think so?—that this truth of ours avoids controversy *because it fears it, because it must fear it?*"

"Not bad," said uncle, "not bad, let us see then what they want to do to us: convert us, is it not?"

"I believe so——"

"Let us consider then in what this conversion consists. Are the Jews to allow themselves to be converted or turned to something that is *quite* different from their present property, or is different only in degree?"

"Different in degree only, of course, inasmuch as Christianity is Judaism perfected."

"The conversion then means, that we are to accept something additional; and what may that be, pray?"

"The belief in Jesus, as the promised Messiah who really came."

"This is it then. In regard to Christianity, we stand in quite a different position from other nations. These latter are to receive something quite new; but with us, it seems, they only desire to alter our house a little; build another story on it, we might say."

"Phrase it so, if you like."

"Now then, if strangers desire to rule in our own house, we, as the owners who are most interested in its welfare, have the right before all others, to an opinion whether the proposed alteration be necessary or not?"

"Certainly. But can not a man, as, for instance, the Irish peasant, grow so accustomed to his mudhut as to have to be *forced* to exchange it for the clean and roomy dwelling that the landowner has built for him?"

"You mean, I suppose, the poor man is hungry, and does not know whether he is or not. And perhaps your Irishman is right in resist-

ing being made happy against his will. But enough of figurative language; the question is then, about acknowledging as Messiah, a person long since dead——"

"Dead, uncle?"

"Well, ascended to Heaven, if you will. True, it might puzzle you somewhat to say what that means. However, this story is a pretty old one to the Jews; and as they have not bethought themselves of it in almost two thousand years, if *I* were a Christian missionary, I fear I should have lost all hope; would you not too?"

I was at a loss to reply and remained silent.

"What does it matter that this aspirant for recognition is *not* acknowledged by the people he laid claim to? He has many other subjects. Do the great Mogul's Hindoos distress themselves because the Mongolians of Central Asia do not recognize their Lord in Delhi as the descendant of their own lame Devastator-of-towns? But us Jews they will not leave alone, as we live on, caring nothing for their new invention, satisfied to live under the same Deity as ever, and needing no other Messiah. He whom the heathens acknowledged, could not convince our fathers by word or deed. Are ye then mightier than he, and wiser? We, for our part, do not claim to be worse than our forefathers, and I would remind you of the proverb: 'When we were young, they considered us men: now we are old, they consider us children.'"

"Uncle, you promised to examine the question to please me."

"Well then, to please you. The question is, was that individual a Messiah or not? First, however, we must agree on the meaning of this word. The great Rabbi Akiba declared Bar-Kochba, the leader of the insurrection against the emperor Adrian, as you know, a Messiah, meaning a political liberator. On the other hand, the hopes of enthusiastic visionaries, like Isaiah, were directed higher; they looked for a hero, whose superhuman might and virtue would spread bliss, love and justice, knowledge of the Lord, recognition of His holy name and of His people, among all nations of the earth. Which of the two conceptions shall we adopt?"

"I prefer a third. The view that makes of Messiah a redeemer from sin and error; the bestower, not of political welfare, nor indeed of temporary welfare in any shape, but of eternal bliss."

"Yes, yes, so the phrase runs!"

"Do you not think the phrase stands for a reality, a possible reality?"

"Perhaps for Christians, not for us. We have, you see, no eternal purgatory, so we do not need a special provision for eternal bliss. You must choose between those two conceptions of Messiah; they are the only Jewish ones; as regards their further development, you granted just now that that was our affair. Besides, it seems more than curious that strangers should claim to understand our national idea better than we: *they* surely can not feel it."

"Feel an idea, uncle?"

"Yes, you will understand me better later. To repeat: in which signification are we to take the word Messiah?"

"If I take it in the Jewish sense——"

"If you take it in the Jewish sense? Why, Samuel, did the doctrine of Messiah arise among Jews or Heathens? I grant you, the tropical plant, transferred into our northern climate, if it do not die, will become stunted, and acquire the features of a different genus; but who wishes you to describe date-palms as they grow in Italy, or orange-trees as we see them in Germany? There is a certain Christian theological professor, who has cut our whole history to the pattern of *his* idea of the Messiah. He proves to us that the idea of a Redeemer is a purely national one, brought with us out of Egypt; but when the true Redeemer revealed himself in person, we Jews would not believe in him—we, the same Jews whom they blame to-day, after the example of the skeptic Horace, as the credulous people *par excellence*. Strange that the oppressed bondmen of Egypt understood the idea of a Redeemer, and after a national history of fifteen hundred years under the guidance of the Eternal, were so foolish as to deny what was before their very eyes: and it was the same Redeemer, Samuel, was it not?"

"I know not, uncle, what the Christian would answer you."

"But if it was another, there must have been two Gods!"

"Well, yes, it must have been the same."

"Good. Now if you, Samuel, were to go away ten years, on your return I should not expect to find you exactly the same. Change is the essence of every organism; but my God must not change. He is the same always, just as the chemical elements are the same to-day as they were centuries ago. Do you not think so?"



“I grant it.”

“Well then. The Redeemer from Egyptian slavery redeemed us indeed, and did not give us words only. He released us from external servitude, and made us mentally free by means of the Law which Moses handed down to us, and expressly as eternal; for those who would alter it are condemned in advance as false prophets. This Law our ancestors accepted of their own free will, and vowed allegiance thereto. Since then, the Redeemer has not disappeared from our midst; we have remained in constant intercourse with him through his servants the prophets, until the encroachments of Heathendom weakened our national strength, and the Lord no more announced his will to us directly. Then, in the time of the second Temple, our national mind took refuge in letters and forms, for the Stranger ruled over us. Grecian splendor dazzled us, we admired their fine literature and their manufactures, their military art, and the order displayed in their system of government; we gloated on Plato's Ideals and, perhaps, were not insensible to the beauty of their slaves. Enlightenment was the watchword of the times, almost as it is to-day, Samuel; enlightenment, education, culture, civilization, you know the cant probably better than I. Unfortunately only the rich, that precious ‘peace-party’ of Josephus, could afford these Grecian pleasures; for these superior luxuries demanded, for their support, the poverty of the few. The poor plebeians were still in the same position: they hoped for and believed in the Redeemer who had brought them out of Egypt, who had wielded Gideon's sword, and inspired the shepherd-son of Jesse; they loved the men who devoted their lifetime to His eternal commands, made the study of them their duty, and patriotically separated themselves sternly from Heathendom. They were therefore called Pharisees.

“At last, through our latter Maccabee kings, through the Idumeans, and finally through Rome, there came unspeakable misery over our country. The same system that depopulated Italy, that drove the Gallic peasants into revolt, and against which Germany in vain waged a war of extermination, reigned in increased measure in Judea. In the other countries, those who wielded power were men: over us they set their slaves. It was another Egyptian bondage: ask your Tacitus: a harsher suffering than we experienced from the Assyrians and Chaldeans. Louder and ever louder waxed the long-



ing of Israel for its Redeemer, for it knew yet it was under His protection.

“If then, under these circumstances, any one appeared and claimed to be that Redeemer, the first condition would have been, that he should have appeared in human form; for the people knew, from doctrine and from their history, that the Lord was a supernatural being who, to carry out His will, always made use of human instruments. It was strictly forbidden to limit the unlimitable, even through symbols: to find him in the narrow limits of a human being, required the interpretative power of a Hindoo or a Grecian priest.

“The second condition of belief was the feat of deliverance from Roman tyranny. Through actual deeds we had been delivered from Pharaoh, from the Philistines, from the Chaldeans. We needed no other redemption: in our minds, we were free, like the Pharisees, the Separatists, from Heathenism. For the pious servant of the Lord exemplifies what philosophy sets up as the essence of freedom: without compulsion, of his own accord, he obeys the dictates of high morality, the law to which, as recognized truth, he submits with affection. A Buddha, a caste system, prejudice of rank, and priestly arrogance, were needed neither by Heathens nor by Jews.

“You know how the pretender fulfilled these conditions, how much he surpassed his predecessors in presumption, how much he fell short of them in actual deeds. How could we recognize the man who, in contradiction of our whole history of two thousand years, wanted to liberate us from the Romans *with words*; who preached nothing but humility and submission, which we had already tasted to the very dregs; how could he hope to comfort a freedom-loving and enslaved people by erecting on their already completed temple—a little Heathen turret? If now the descendants of the Heathens, who became mentally free through our law, given to them in his name, demand of us that we should acknowledge him as our liberator, would it appear right to you? Do you think it proper to summon the English, whose constitution we have adopted through the medium of the French, to give up their original and accept our copy as the standard?”

“But how often,” I replied, “must theory be corrected by practice. Gas-lighting and railways were condemned by the most cele-

brated *savants* as idle dreams, until the despised mechanician illuminated the streets by night, and set the fiery locomotive rolling. So here too, perhaps the facts will show, the world's history prove irrefragably, to him who will open his eyes, that Messiah really has come, while we, in our imperturbable obstinacy, thinking that the world exists only for the people Israel, accuse all the civilized and enlightened nations who accept the Christian dispensation, of error; we, the infinitely small minority, the last remnants of a nation whose stiff-neckedness even its own lawgiver bemoaned, while we do not read that he ever had cause to rejoice over the degree of their enlightenment."

"Go on, go on! Do you too cast the stone upon the mother who bore you? But explain to me about the world's history. Do you assert that its results bear out the Messianic idea of the nations, and disprove that of the Jews?"

"I do."

"But which history do you mean? The present or the past?"

"I know but one."

"But an unlimited, an incomplete and varying one; like a moving panorama, or better still, like a giant river that flows on, now softly, now stormily, and passes through an ever-changing landscape. Wherever you stand still and look back, you see a different picture. Above, in the mountains, the stream of melted snow bursts from the glacier in foam; lower down on the mountain side, it rushes merrily along, a swift and joyous river, and then rolls slowly, as a broad fertilizing stream, through the wide plain. But it has not yet reached the sea; has it?"

"No one can assert that."

"Then you see, I was right to ask you which portion of the river, or rather, of history, we were to examine. I think you would scarcely be satisfied with some portions; or would you accept the idea of the Middle Ages as your own?"

"Perhaps that same idea was not so very wrong after all: it was narrow, but extremely simple; fanatical, but conscientious."

"I see you defend your ground like a good general, step by step. Permit me then to give you just a small example of that extremely simple and conscientious idea. It is only one of a thousand such. Is not that Joinville's chronicles yonder?"

I handed him the book. After he had turned over a few leaves, he gave it to me open, and I read.

*“Aussi vous di jé, me dist le roy, que nul si ce n'est grand clerc et théologien parfait ne doit disputer aux Juifs, mais doit l'omnelay quand il oit mesdire de la foy chrétienne défendre la chose, non pas seulement de paroles, mais à la bonne épée tranchant et en frapper les maudissants et mécréans à travers le corps tant qu'elle y pourra entrer.”*

“Thus spake the good king Louis,” said the uncle, as I was silent. “What surname did they give the man?”

“The Pious,” I answered, crestfallen.

“And I remember a brave knight of the German Henry IV., I forgot whether it is in Bruno or in Lambert, gave an emphatic development of that worthy suggestion.”

“Perhaps it was only the fanaticism of the Crusades.”

“And before that; let Gregory of Tours tell you how the Franks slaughtered those who would not be induced to become baptized; or read in Thierry with what reasons the enlightened prelate strove to convert the honest merchant.

“Let us remain here a moment, and do you tell me which side the unprejudiced man should take. Enter the church of the Gallo-Franks, in which the holy saint Martin, the national god of the country, stands in all the glory of gold and silver. Watch how they fall down, prostrate themselves before him in adoration, listen how they call to that doll for help in their deeds of violence, and then, if you can, chide the oppressed son Israel, who will not forget the command of Him who spake: ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.’ Read how the cunning and silly ruler, to ascertain the will of the idol, writes a letter to it, and then reprove the Jew, who, enlightened by his Law, looks down with contempt and scorn upon such pious frauds. Compassionate your fathers as you will, but they alone were exalted above the despotism of the German and Scandinavian princes, who, besides political laws, imposed a religious conviction on their subjects.

“Glance along the whole lengthy chain of the fearful thousand years which are called the Middle Ages, and tell me where a lover of truth and justice, of mental freedom and morality, dared bid the Jew, ‘Embrace this religion, it is purer than yours: join these men,



they are better than you.' For what could the unprejudiced Christian say to us? Something of this nature. 'Come to us: it is true we have never ascertained the truth of our faith; indeed, we can not read, and our holy books are therefore sealed to us; but our priests assert they have the truth, and since they possess superhuman influence, belonging as they do to an institution set up by Heaven, called *church*, about which it is true we know nothing, therefore we must not only believe them, but obey all they command implicitly. Come to us, for as we are allowed to practice all sorts of vices and excess, you will certainly live more agreeably among us; they say our God is love, and so we shall not lack pardon when it is needed.

"It is true our priests tell us, that for those of us who do not obey his will, which, however, we do not know, God has prepared a place called "Hell," in which he makes erring mortals suffer excruciating tortures for the myriads of years of eternity, and all for the sin of a moment, ay, even for the sin of being born an infidel; and it must be true, for a great many travelers have seen the entrance to those infernal regions of torment in Ireland<sup>6</sup> with their own eyes. But see now how well we are provided: our priests possess the power of closing these gates of agony, and opening those of Heaven: so if we are on good terms with the priests, we need not fear the Hell of our God of Eternal love. Let us then make this short life of ours as merry and as carnal as we can; when we get old, and our senses are too blunted for any more enjoyment, then we will go into a monastery and turn our back forever on the sinful world. We will make our daughter a nun, and let her pine away her young life; we will compel our son to pass his days uselessly as a monk. It is true, this is sacrificing our children to Moloch, but then we escape punishment thereby. Or perhaps we will offer gold and property, for the kind priest will take with equally ready hand our money as well as our children, and then he pronounces us guiltless again, and gives a document signed and sealed, entitling us to a future life of bliss, so that howling old Satan will flee before his otherwise certain prey; with fear and trembling. Well, Jew, do you still hesitate?'

"And if he did hesitate, did pause, Samuel? For in him resounded the voice of the Lord: *Thou shalt be my holy people, for I, the Lord thy God, am holy! Thou shalt not serve other gods, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not murder*—if he remembered that he



personally had inherited from his father the obligation of observing this covenant with the Most High, the sign of which he bore on his body—if he shuddered at the sin and madness of handing over his conscience to the priest, and being driven like a beast into the herd of the heathen—if he thought of all this, you know what followed then, Samuel? Oh! then there were other signs and tokens to convert these obstinate infidels, the deniers and murderers of the new god: there was fire to burn, water to drown, the rack to torture! All these pious instruments did they employ on our fathers with no sparing hand: they burned thousands, drowned, slaughtered—and the remnant they hunted, chased through Europe, and expended all the resources of their inventive power to humble them in their own eyes. Yes, the learned and very deep Middle Ages used all their hollow wisdom and savage cruelty to teach the Jews a better creed! True, you may say, What folly it was for the wretches to set themselves against the tide of history, how presumptuous, even if confident of their own right, to dare brave the whole world!”

“No, uncle, a thousand times no!” I cried, unable to restrain myself, “the glory of those martyrs shall not be belittled! How many are there in antiquity or in Christian times, who have been brave enough to suffer torture and death for the Truth, and here there is a whole people who have accepted martyrdom from pure conviction, and have not relinquished the Truth, because it was the Truth! O uncle, you give me new life! Am not I descended from these heroes too? Surely their blood flows in my veins, and I should be unworthy of such high lineage were I not capable of appreciating what they did, even if I do not yet know whether I have the power to imitate them!”

“So then it appears,” said uncle, “you are ready to pardon the Jews of the Middle Ages for relying on eternal felicity, without possessing a chip of the Holy Cross, or a hair from the beard of some apostle?”

“I admit, and every enlightened Christian must admit too, that however debased Judaism may have been, it was infinitely to be preferred to such idolatry. I will surrender these Middle Ages, and confine the results of history to the first two and the last three centuries of Christianity.”

“You can scarcely call a people debased, Samuel, that produced

at that very epoch such distinguished thinkers and poets, whose works have become models for our modern times; however, let us not wander from the discussion.

“That is a funny idea of yours concerning ‘the results of history,’ as you phrase it, or historical proof: what is true to-day is false to-morrow. According to you, then, in the first two centuries the Jew ought to have been converted, because indisputable Truth was offered him; but see how soon the converters fell to fighting violently about impenetrable mysteries, and shed streams of blood to decide the question whether pictures should receive adoration or not; so that the acceptance of their doctrines was scarcely to be recommended to the Jew. It is true these doctrines were only a little obscure for just the small space of thirteen hundred years; but you must confess that a species of truth that can so fully become falsehood, to say the least, is suspicious, and that I ought not to be blamed for fearing that perhaps after these last three very enlightened centuries which you laud so highly, yet such another period of obscurity may occur in Christianity and debase it far below the lowest phase of our simple Judaism; so that my great-grandchildren will have scant cause to thank me for having been the means of their receiving the new dispensation.”

“Do you not grant that humanity, as a whole, always progresses?” said I.

He nodded affirmatively, and I continued: “If then retrogression ensues, it is only apparently such. Now ought I to stop on the lowest spurs of the Alps, because I can not get any higher toward the summit of Mont Blanc from the peak of the Rigi, but must descend and cross many a deep valley, and many a lofty crest besides, till I reach the greatest Alpine height?”

“Well, you are right so far, but you should confine your progress to single organizations; in our case, to people and men in general. Ideas and institutions are different things, or would you perhaps maintain that whatever is later in point of time, is better too? Christianity better than Judaism, Islam better than either, Mormonism than all? Shall we say so?”

“That would be evidently false.”

“Let us examine your historical proof then a little further. Let us consider what we are more entitled to judge: the later centuries. In those first two, when everything was only in course of develop-

ment, we will allow, there we can not speak of historical results. In the Sixteenth Century then, the Jew ought to have recognized the newly-risen star. His brethren, just driven out of the Iberian peninsula, and perishing with hunger and pestilence, made powerful preachers of the wonders of loving Catholicism. And I am sorry to say, the Protestants were not any more humane. I will say nothing of Luther, nor of those two centuries to which the barbarism of the Middle Ages yet adhered. Dared the down-trodden 'serf of the the Emperor,' as the Jew was called, demand that the nations should respect the man in him, simply because they had at length actually dared to shake off the authority of a man in Rome? No, let us look only at the last century. See with what praiseworthy pains the good town of Frankfort cooped up its Jewish inhabitants in the close Ghetto, shut out from light and air! Again and again does the worthy Seume ask the reason;—'They would obstruct the streets!' 'inconvenience Christians!' etc. They can give no other answer."

“But was that not an exceptional case perhaps?”

“You will find the same obloquy in every other possible form. I will not recount that past history to you: it is better you remain ignorant of it.”

“Then I must allow the Protestants, too, acted most unchristianly toward their Jewish brothers, and that they deserve more censure than the Iroquaws and Jagas, whose religion does not enjoin the love of neighbors. But is it the proper way to estimate the degree of culture of the nations when we make their treatment of the Jews the measure?”

“We may not be so very wrong in doing so; but you are right to remind me that we should not remain on the consideration of past troubles; perhaps I have already dwelt upon them too long for the aim of our disputation. Indeed, I have always admired the wisdom of our fathers who never gave us any accounts of their suffering among the strange nations. They bore their distress as sent by God, without revengeful feelings toward their oppressors, and when the chains were lightened a little, they gazed with thankful eyes upon the relieving hand. Thus we have grown up without any inborn prejudice against our fellow-men; in our youth, when love and hatred take deepest root, we feel ourselves their brothers, until our later life



teaches us to restrict this feeling somewhat. But let us resume: what led you to single out the last three centuries?"

"Is it necessary to point out the sun? One word suffices: the '*Reformation.*'"

"Hm! that sun of yours, my friend, for many a year has blazed with somewhat diminished brilliancy: another comet or so would greatly aid it. Since I now am totally unable to see it, you must be good enough to point it out to me. I will tell you all I know about it. A number of Roman Catholic Christians renounced the authority of a priest over their reason and conscience, emancipated themselves from the most comprehensive and complete moral despotism that ever existed in the world, and which they had borne a thousand years. They threw off the authority of a man, to submit themselves to that of a book, the much-meaning "Word." They tried to fashion their religion anew, and selected from their former faith what they considered to contain true Christianity. Their leaders made no claim to be considered inspired. They shattered the enthralling power of Rome for certain reasons, that is, guided by common-sense, and it was reason that had to help them to build up again. Luther and Calvin would recognize only the Bible as the word of God, and yet the Bible is not sufficient for either. They have recourse to the Church Fathers and to Platonic Indian dogmas, of which the poor Evangelists knew not a syllable, and this system of faith, built on such a foundation, they gave their disciples to swear by.

"But, my son, let us leave it to the Catholics to sum up the sins of the Protestants; to prove to them they have only the name of a religion; that they accept tradition in practice, while they deny it in theory; and that out of such opposite materials as criticism and dogma they have constructed an untenable fortress: let us attend, as you desired, only to the results. Well, we see the English change their religion at the decree of their monarchs; we see religion in Germany producing the dreadful Thirty Years' War, in order that kings and princes might attain liberty of conscience: everywhere the victorious party strives to teach the conquered by means of fire and sword. Then follow in Europe, and even in America, the shocking spectacles of trials for witchcraft—but excuse me depicting those to you. You know the facts as well as I do: you know all about the wars of conquest and the traffic in human beings which disgraced the rulers of



the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, and the degradation and frivolity of the ruled. You know how long it is that we can boast of the abolition of torture and of serfdom. No, my son: the new life that flows in the arteries of our modern times, my word for it, does *not* come from Christianity. The English Deists, who first sought the foundation of humanity, morality, and freedom in the sound common-sense of the masses, were decided foes of Christianity; the French Encyclopædia and the Revolution, the champions of such ideas on the Continent, actually strove to destroy that religion. The great philosophers and poets who freed the German mind from the bonds of pedantry, the love of imitation, of aping their neighbors, were diametrically opposed to that code, and stood upon quite other ground. He who is acquainted with history knows indisputably, that enlightenment and toleration owe their origin to the restoration of learning. Theological bickerings and absurdities nipped the opening bud of Science and Art in the Fifteenth Century; only when men, weakened by the so-called religious wars, had unwelcome leisure to take up the work of that century afresh, only then, I say, did the phantoms with which the priests used to terrify the foolish mob, vanish in the light of knowledge, only then did humanity and philanthropy strike root in the hearts of the nations. And now your pious humbugs come and seize the fruit of the tree whose growth they had impeded with all their might, and exclaim:—"Behold now, the blessing of our religion!"

"These are assertions, uncle," I said, moved —

"Assertions which you must examine, my son, is it not so? Who would agree to that sooner than I?"

"I will go now, uncle; I fear I have detained you too long." I saw for the first time that it had grown night, that I had been sitting in darkness without noticing it.

"Well, we shall see you at tea this evening, Samuel?"

"Excuse me, uncle, I think not. Leave me to myself to-night."

"Well, good night, my son."

"Good night, uncle, good night."

## LETTER IX.

NOVEMBER 25TH, 185--.

I HAVE not been out for several days. I feel myself ill: would that I had never come here! Why did I not take holy orders directly after my recovery, and go to some quiet fishing-village, and work among the poor and lowly community for their welfare? I should have labored and rejoiced in my labor. I should have paid my adoration to my fetish and have been satisfied therewith; I would have decked him gayly. And he would have rewarded me. Is it not all one in what absurdity men seek their peace of soul? I ought to have known that an insane longing to reach the unattainable crouches in my heart, and should have been wise enough to slay the monster-passion, instead of making it my master by furnishing new aliment to it. I finished once, condemned my wisdom and swore by the words of others, for I could not go any further by myself. God! my God! Why hast thou made me so wretched? I am thrown back to the old spot, and the treacherous bandage wherewith I had bound my wounds, and which the poor invalid thought contained an anodyne for the ills of humanity (was forced to think it such, in order to deceive himself as to his own situation), has rent into a thousand tatters, and he who sought to lead others, has proved to be a miserable cripple himself! No, I will not believe against my better knowledge: it is a sin to pray for a faith that shall oppose my own heaven-born reason. I am again in the old dilemma, but this time I *will* solve it if it cost——

O father! be not angry with me, have consideration for the unhappy one whom an inward torture compels to take his own course which he loathes and fears. Indeed it is not your fault! You worked for my welfare. The teachings of the religion which had given you happiness from your earliest years, you strove to instill into me again and again. My childish lips spoke the words as you

dictated them. I believed in you, had as soon repeated after you, *Allah is God, and Mohammed is his prophet!*" But all this religion remained to me as so many words, and never became part of my mind; at my confirmation, while I proclaimed my belief in the Incarnation and the Trinity, in my heart I doubted—oh, do not condemn me—I doubted the very existence of a God! For the fundamental idea from on high which I had imbibed with my mother's milk, stood in such glaring contradiction to all the petty and useless wonders of your faith, that I began to grow confused even as to the existence of a Higher Being. I applied myself to Natural Science and soon became convinced that all miracles were either fables or tricks of the priesthood. For is not the Fetishman among the Negroes, or the Asiatic Shaman, ay, even the Catholic monk, as successful in producing them as that one in Syria, a thousand years ago? It is only in the light of science that these flowers of darkness fail to grow! So I said to myself, "All is deceit and trickery."

But when I walked alone of an evening and gazed on the starry splendor above, and tried to translate its magnitudes and distances into human language, I could not keep back higher promptings, and my lacerated heart *felt* it could not live without a God. "There *must* be a God!" I said to myself; "for without Him the world would be an absurdity: I need Him, therefore He must be there."

But how should I obtain information about Him? He was the only one who could give me information about life's real aim. For I rejected all the positive religions as equally untrue; I regarded Christianity with the eyes of the Jew, and Judaism with the eyes of a Christian: both the revengeful God and the One that died out of love, seemed to me equally senseless. The former Deity, who with wrath persecutes his creatures who had not made themselves, the latter God, above all conceptions of space and time, yet residing thirty years in a wretched human body! No, the God whom I *felt*, Him would I recognize, and therefore I rejected all others. I sought to discover the truth that lay at the bottom of all this deception, and this knowledge I hoped to obtain at the university.

I sought eagerly, like many a bolder mind than mine before me. Alas, it was in vain! With ardent zeal I waded deep in the works of philosophers, famous and infamous; I hoped on, even if it were only to find a hint that should give me an indication of the right way.

Suddenly, and like a flash of lightning, I came across the words of Spinoza:—" *Whence shall we perceive God, if not from His works?*" What could be clearer, more practicable? "Examine Nature, History, the world's economy!" I said to myself, "and you will find what you seek." *But it was in vain.* I could perceive no aim in Nature, in Political Economy no liberty, in History no law; what philosophers tell about them, they have themselves invented at their study-desks.

That was a fearful period: there is no describing my misery. The world was a confused medley to me: I knew not what I should do among men; *they* all seemed to work toward a certain end, each one seemed to know what he wanted—I alone was dissatisfied and disgusted with all things. When I left my study, I walked about with my eyes full of tears for myself and for the insane, wretched world, until I reached home again, and gave myself up anew to solitary, sullen brooding.

But in the recesses of my heart, there lay the firm conviction that there *was* such a thing as Truth, even if I was unable to find it. Perhaps another has been stronger or more fortunate: I will set forth and seek out the great unknown master. I traversed the greater part of Europe, wishing to study men at first hand, and no more from books. I fell in with the right school in France. I drank full draughts from the fountain of Skepticism, and intoxicated myself with doubting. Tired and wearied of my grumbling which never satisfied me and raised a wall, as it were, between me and the world of active life, I plunged eagerly into the flood of sensuality. I sought to intoxicate myself, fill up thereby that fearful void in my mind; and when amid the carousals of my worthless boon companions, my heart put the uneasy question to me, "What right have *you* here?" warned me that *my* nature was different to theirs, that I had to live for other aims, I threw myself scornfully into a woman's arms, and exclaimed: "Here at least I have reality!"

I desired to live and I did. I emptied the cup of pleasure to its very dregs—and I found it as bitter as gall. Pleasure of the senses was just as unfruitful and as hollow as mental exertion, only more hurtful. I fell ill. I felt my strength depart daily, and my nights were passed in ever wilder madness. At length, enervated, I sank upon a sick-bed, and thinking the time had come, journeyed home to die.



I did not die, and I felt that I must live. In the first new strength of recovery I was ashamed that I had wished to flee from my post. "Fool!" I exclaimed, "who wishes to be wiser than all the world! Every one is satisfied with his portion of earth, and you seek to gain possession of Heaven. Yes, Ecclesiastes is right:—The more knowledge, the more care." It is folly to try to unite head and heart: if the former does not yield you satisfaction, the latter must be pacified at any cost.

Then I bade you repeat your dogmas and looked for hope in them. Although they gave me no explanation of my life and of the misery of my fellow-mortals, and no consolation, yet they furnished me at least with a sort of calm, and then I smiled at the proud dreams of my youth, when I imagined to find in the world itself the key to the solution of its riddles. Yes, your plan of making me a powerful instrument for the conversion of my people seemed to me not without a meaning assigned by Providence; a new light shone forth in me, I began to see a higher aim in my life, and through instructing others I might hope to instruct myself too.

But, O my father, why have you done this with me? I am no hypocrite, and I am lost! How dared I attempt to make men happy with artificial fruits, men who in their calm conviction stand there like mighty forest monarchs? Foolish gardener, who desires to transplant an oak, a thousand years old, to make it grow better! Oh, scorn me not, for I am wretched! Reason has asserted its ascendancy again. And I laughed bitterly over the old-women's tales in which I had sought a pitiful shelter! But if it were only this—if I had only my own weakness to endure! Here have I come in the *rôle* of a missionary, and with the conscience of a man. He who undertakes to tear friend from friend, son from father—he is right! I have proved it myself:—he must have the heart of a serpent, and that, alas! I have not! My moral feeling predominates over all my book-learning about things divine, and where they come into conflict with each other, I do not hesitate before I shatter what I called religion!

Alas! my father, I am doing no good in this house: perhaps it will do me some: perhaps, perhaps!

## LETTER X.

CAN it be true, that mystery? True that which we all know, and yet appear not to know? Nay, surely not, it is not true. So deep we have not sunk, to such a level the enlightened Indo-Germanic race, the one of all others fitted for progress, has not yet descended. Read in the huge books how much we have achieved. We make the lightning our messenger, count the inconceivably rapid vibrations of the invisible Light-ether: can trace the formation and development of the tiny plant ovule in its matrix, and distinguish a hundred species of animalculæ, a thousand individuals of which have room abundant in a water-drop: and we, my fatherly friend? We, who straighten ourselves up before the simple savage in our vain ignorance, and say to him:—"Wretched being, dull soul, unawakened by the breath of the spirit, *we* are of other flesh than thy flesh, our blood is other than thy blood." Can it be that these proud ones have not the courage to be true?

Yes, that universal mystery is, *die!* We believe that the Eternal who fills immeasurable and innumerable worlds with his existence, who awakens life in the depths of oceans and in the glacier ice: who has bound yon sparkling Sirius in his place and guides my poor body with paternal care; we believe, I say, that this Exalted One, this Ineffable Being—abdicated the throne of the world for a time, and was born an unconscious, puny mortal child of a Jewish woman! Who saw to it that the sun did not become extinguished, that the glorious orbs did not dash together in mad confusion and uproar? For the Lord of the universe lay upon a cushion and bled: he had been circumcised—is it not so, my father, do we not all believe it, all? Yes! yes! Show me two men who say "yes!" with me, and "yes," and ever "yes!"

Nay, father, we are not so dishonorable, from fear or from selfishness, as to deceive each other; from pride, to plume ourselves boldly

with a falsehood about which we laugh in our heart: we are not so utterly unprincipled as to be indifferent to truth and endure evil with a shrug of the shoulders. No, we are not such wretched hypocrites. It is true that modern research shows that those writings on which we swear with our eyes shut, are tendency-tracts written at a comparatively late period. We gaze compassionately on those who try to prove the Truth by means of a miracle that happened centuries ago; but oh! surely my fellow-men are not so base that they would assert against their better knowledge that black is white, and white black—they can not be so, do you not believe it?

Surely not; they can not swear things they hold to be untrue, because it would bring them gold and station; they can not in miserable courtesy depend upon a conviction in another's mind, when they know that conviction does not exist there—oh, no, my father, my fellow-men can not be so base! No, the masses live on unconsciously, the world wags on, and why should the few sentient ones approach the breach; for he who till now wielded the pick against the rotten building, tore down like a youth and not like an old man!

I know full well what the wise and good among the so-called Christians would answer me. "We grant that our dogmas are unnatural, ay, if you will, blasphemous: we know well that the Holy Trinity is a clumsy invention by priestly grace, and that it is an absurdity to speak of bodily Reas<sup>n</sup> of the Almighty. But with these foolish conceits, the ~~best~~ <sup>greatest</sup> goods of humanity are closely bound up; the purest virtue, true morality on which society depends, were preached by the Founder of our faith; if then we take away his authentication, what assurance have we that his teachings would not fall too? Let us therefore bear with those dogmas which after all are harmless in themselves. Our code of morals is so interwoven with them that it would be dangerous to attempt to tear one from the other!" All this sounds well and plausible, and there comes forward the allegory of the gold coin that could not circulate as pure and unalloyed metal, and then we are satisfied. We? I wish I too could be satisfied with words, but I can not. I can not do without God: he has become my All. Yes, more than society and morals—and slander Him I dare not, not even for the very highest aims. Away with the Jesuitical maxim that poisons our whole life!

Death to all falsehood: a struggle can not injure noble Truth, it will only leave the battle-field more glorious!

And who will give me a guarantee that that morality of yours you say is so bound up with your doctrines, is really the true system you laud it to be? It may be that the Universal Mystery shall reveal itself again; it may be that we all do not believe in this truth, only appear to do so, perhaps only *think* we do so: may be too that appearance is allied with falsehood, and both are destined to sink into the grave. I shudder as I think of it, and trembling I lay down the pen, affrighted by my own thoughts!

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## LETTER XI.

DECEMBER 15TH, 185—.

How glad I am, dear father, that I have some one to write to, some one to whom I can tell what my heart compels me to utter. Even if you can not relieve me of it, you will give me to bear my burden. I dare not tell mankind that they do not understand me, for fear of being ridiculed.

It is evening and I am alone. Outside the snow is blowing through the air, the wind whistles and howls round the corners of the yard, and even agitates my window curtains. I am walking to and fro in my room, exulting like a child in the turmoil of the elements: like a child, or like a fool. "Blow, ye winds and crack your cheeks!" I could exclaim with Lear—but what right have I to compare myself to the grand old King? O fortunate time! When it required the base deeds of two inhuman daughters and the plotting of an assassin-brother to heave the world from its hinges! We later ones are as dejected as the prophet-poet himself, on account of—a straw, a cipher: we know not ourselves what ails us!



“Repose and peace!” “Yes, repose and peace!” I repeat to myself, and a sweet hope steals over me involuntarily; but I have sworn by reality and ask myself scornfully, who invented those silly words? Oh, it is enough to make a man raving mad to find his noblest innate impulses are only deceiving threads in the labyrinth, phantoms to amuse his fancy until his senses have become strong enough to slay his heart! Father, let me whisper a word in your ear; softly that no one hear it: *life has become a burden to me*: to what end all the toil and suffering, to what end? We have lost the art of living and rush wildly across each other's irregular course, brother dashes heedlessly against brother, and springs lightly over him he has thrown down. We have lost the art of living, or our ancestors were as bad as we are, without knowing it. And to what end the knowledge, if it only make us the more miserable; to what end open our eyes, if they see only our shame? Oh, why can we not purchase forgetfulness as well as knowledge? I would give all I possess to him who would teach me this precious art. Henceforth I will prefer to see a grave dug to a school founded, and think with tears of the Reformation which destroyed the sweet delusion of mankind. Oh, well I know what I would do if I could only forget; for what can be more delightful than to shift one's fearful personal responsibility on to the shoulders of the community, and enjoy our heart's, our senses' fill! But I have enjoyed neither with heart nor with senses, I have lived only with my reason, and I can now no more endure this tyranny.

Why must I commence my attempt on one of the oldest civilized peoples in the heart of this sad Europe? Why not try the innocent children of Nature, if we have left any such remaining? I fancy I could have found men among the so-called savages who have leisure to be men; perhaps they would have undertaken the performance of those golden doctrines, perhaps have proved it was possible to be a Christian in more than name, for we Europeans and Americans are a god-forsaken people: like the sick man weary of his couch, we throw ourselves impatiently from side to side, but in every position the same wounds burn us. It is a secret malady, and we do not like to speak of it: we know it is incurable, and we try our utmost to conceal it.

One would think our whole life was a course of practice in that

art of forgetfulness for which I just was sighing. The training for the great chase commences while young, and at the same time a whole catalogue of duties is instilled into us which we neither keep nor are expected to. Scarcely are we out of our swaddling clothes when the real training commences: "What do not people expect nowadays?" say the parents. They make the days of golden childhood bitter with scraps of Latin, they garner so much dead matter in our minds daily, that they successfully destroy original germs. "Education! education!" is the universal remedy which is prescribed for every ill: it is the elixir of life, avails against all infirmities, against poverty in the individual, and against the transgressions of society. But men who can read and write make as good murderers as the savages of the primeval forest; crime has become more refined among our highly educated classes and is more successful in evading justice. An advantage certainly. Whether your schools have benefited the great masses who live from hand to mouth, is to be doubted. They have to toil in one way or another to gain a livelihood—that must always be.

I have watched with interest the exertions of the Socialists both in England and France, I have read the books in which they have laid down their theories, and have inspected their practical attempts. But this age is an unfruitful one, and their creations have remained nerveless phantoms. It is an egregious folly to try to make men happy before they are good, it is the height of absurdity to ignore mental disorder in pity for bodily ailments and bodily want. A mudhut is as fitting a residence for men as a marble palace, sack-cloth as good as silk; does not the lunatic who thinks he is a prince, and receives us on his straw-pallet, show us where the true value of things is to be sought?

When I balance the conditions of the poor and rich; when on the one side I find brutality and want, unclouded delight in sensual enjoyment, freedom, nay unbridled liberty of social life; and on the other, superfluity and satiety, unbounded avarice and jealousy, slavery to fashion and appearances, and malicious narrow-mindedness: I really do not know which class has the better lot: and I think that each has its deserts. How little reason the blithe artisan, depending on the strength of his two hands, has to envy the sickly gentleman! And you, little seamstress, who take your meagre day's hire home to your mother, and as you pour out the old folks' glass of beer,

detail in ecstasies all the splendor and elegance of your lady-employer's dresses—could you just peep into the bosoms of those stately princesses which your gaudy handiwork conceals—you too, I dare wager, would become a wee philosopher and have a little gratitude for Him who has appointed so lowly an earthly lot for you.

It is not happiness that men lack, but goodness; no one has ever given them that. Christianity, like every other faith, split upon this rock: yes, it has split! An incontrovertible truth nowadays. Indeed, the unprejudiced inquirer into history must ask himself the question in all seriousness: did European civilization arise *through* Christianity, or *in spite* of it? This religion has, in its three great branches, equally fostered priestly tyranny and the ignorance and stupidity of the masses; for the vices she exterminated, she introduced so many fresh ones that the orthodox believer of to-day, regarding historical Truth, can repeat the adage of the old Dogmatics:—*credo quia absurdum est!*

Happy those who are repaid for the hypocrisy and wickedness of our lives by the glitter and show of our civilization! I am not! I shall remain a sarcastic skeptic in the world until my strength fail me, and I purchase peace at the price of my common-sense. For we are all of us thoroughly bad; which of us does not live in falsehood, the father toward his son, the wife toward her husband? I have dwelt among poor factory-hands and found immorality and adultery things of course among them; I resided in the country, and saw how, among the idyllic rustics, prostitution was a recognized institution. The courts of justice punish bigamy as a crime, and a young man is laughed at by his comrades if he does not wallow in the mire of immorality.

All these are inmates of the Christians' hospital, belong to their priestly nation. But let me not forget our own class, the educated, the refined, we who have no other care than to make money, dash like persons possessed, into this noble race for wealth; without looking to the right or left, only to the golden goal, which the nearer we approach, recedes the farther: where is the end, where is contentment acquired with gain? We lavish large sums on our daughters' accomplishments in order that they the more easily may secure a wealthy husband, and weigh their mutual affections by Troy weight, *gold* weight. Meanwhile our learned theologians quarrel about him



in whom we no longer believe, about scruples and points, and excommunicate each other's conviction; and yet all this worthless empty Society plumes itself on its civilization, and brags of its religion as the highest attainment of mankind!

Yes; we are all hollow, ailing wretches. Our foreheads are of brass, and our hearts within are black, hard, cold coal. We look around with longing for an object of adoration, but the stars have all fallen from Heaven, and our ancestors' idols, woman's beauty and princes' power, have become our servants. In vain the poor philosopher bends the knee to the greatness of the past, or the poet attempts to renew the spell of Love's sweet madness over our cold century; we have lost that faith and will be neither slaves of tyrants nor of our senses.

You will ask why I embarked in the boat I see to be on the brink of foundering, why I invite passengers on board when the water is leaking in on all sides? And now the obscure bond which binds me to that wondrous people from whom I sprang, rises to my consciousness. The Jews alone possess the awful power of reality, the Jews alone have disdained to prostrate themselves to hypocrisy, and in every age, in every land, when demanded, they have sealed their faith with their blood. I must confess I begin to reason a little like the Heathen, and almost would not mind, like the Indian, to consider the more powerful God the true one. If error and obstinacy have preserved the Jews through persecutions innumerable, if they have been able to make each wretched peddler into a death-spurning martyr, and every tender maiden into a fearless heroine, scorning suffering; and if, on the other hand, their truth and their faith could make of Christians blood-thirsty fanatics who, bereft of all human feeling, exulted like raving cannibals round the burning stakes of their victims: then I draw back in hesitation and dare scarcely venture to give a verdict! How would it sound if we transposed the names, called the Christians, the Jews, and *vice versa*? Of course this suggestion is nonsensical, but I can not help gazing on this people with a sense of uneasy expectation.

We others, we may as well confess it, have been chasing phantoms and shedding our blood for phrases. The first Christians bled to escape idol-worship, and their own priests founded the adoration of images. Millions sacrificed themselves in the Crusades for the phan-



tom of the Holy Sepulchre, millions in the wars of the Reformation for the lie of Freedom of Conscience, millions again in the struggles of the French Revolution for the chimera of political liberty. We hunt shadows and explore castles in the air; and we always effect the opposite of what we intended; out of the religion of love and sincerity, we have made a religion of hatred and deceit! Judah alone among all the peoples possesses yet the power to do as it wills. It succumbed, in a manner worthy of a great nation, to the Romans, and stood out against the Heathenism of the Middle Ages with a god-like endurance, and where it sacrificed itself, it was to the Eternal whom it served. Perhaps the Jews can teach us to be Christians; maybe they do not remain, as we do, by the word, and just as at the time of Jesus, heroes came from this downtrodden nation who preached the word that brought salvation to the heathens, so now again from the despised seed of Abraham, champions of God shall arise who with strength and spirit shall point out Truth to this rotting world of ours.

Indeed, I should not place my hope in the Jews, if I did not despair of the Christians!

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## LETTER XII.

DECEMBER 24TH, 185—.

“Who will be the Curtius,” I hear a hidden voice repeat within me continually, “who will be the Curtius to leap into the chasm that has split up humanity, in order that it may close?”

Foolish worm that I am! Why do I torture myself with the future of mankind and give myself no peace? Does the world care if an insignificant young man racks his brains in his chamber over the fate of the nations, care whether his heart shudders at the thought of the universal strait? As if the earth, as with the giant peaks of her

snow-clad Alps and her rustling garment of rushing ocean, she swings proudly along on her tract through space, as if she cared which wavelet should wash away the stone reposing quietly on the rivulet's brink! What would be that stone's thoughts, too, while wind and water gradually wear it away? I wonder whether it would imagine the whole earth was being broken up, because its own small mass was being triturated to form soil for the agriculturist?

But even if my thoughts and cares do not concern the community, let alone profit it, yet they profit me. I am filled with a sort of melancholy joy to see my deeds, thoughts, and sentiments deeply interwoven with the deeds, ideas, and passions of my innumerable fellow-men. I have devoted myself too long to the deceptive desire for knowledge, have too long worshiped illusion in order to fill my heart by help of my reason. I stood afar off from the turmoil of the crowd of anxious ones, of the laughing and the crying, watched their airs and gestures with curiosity. The knowledge of these every-day people about causes and reasons is scanty: this is the school where they teach you to act meanly and pettily. I have discontinued learning from them, but have not ceased to err with them. What virtue of mine gave me the right to stand proudly by the way-side, and laugh at those who stumbled and fell? Was it *my* merit that a better temperament or a higher education restrained me, by the rigid law of cause and effect, within the bounds of strict morality? Enough, my self-satisfied solitude has become irksome to me: what were the contents of that noisy, variegated life in which I saw men moving around? I wanted to find out: woe is me! Not in vain did I inoculate myself with the vices of my comrades! Who can boast that he holds the end as well as the beginning in his power? Enough. I often had to obey, grinding my teeth, where formerly I had commanded with a smile! I know not whether I have made progress or the reverse, whether I have descended from my altitude into a valley that leads to a higher peak, or whether I have wandered into a swampy hollow. But this much I know: I have become a MAN like the others, and this is a comfort to me, a sweet comfort. Oh, now I am filled with joy to think that these men are flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone. The good deeds of past generations benefit me and my contemporaries equally, equally too do we suffer for our fathers' sins. The sources of my deepest emotions lie concealed in

events a thousand years old, and men I do not know, people across the mountains and the ocean, sigh for the same things as I do, rejoice in that which gives me joy. If then I am to share their life, even to their most secret failings, do not call me a dreamer again, when, painfully pondering over the fate of these generations, I ask : "Who will be the modern Curtius?"

For there is a division among these men : Christianity is split into two huge camps. The heart has revolted against the head, and awaits only the signal for open rebellion. That ancient agitator, Reason, defeated so often, ventures yet again to mutiny against the powers that govern life, and all who have learned to doubt rally round his wondrous standard, "Truth." Those who do not yet know what it is to doubt, those who have come to despair, gather round the bloody flag of "Faith." On this side and on yonder, weapons are flashing, warriors are shouting : awaiting with impatience the time for the encounter. Who will tear the veil from their eyes, who will wring their fanatic rage from their hearts ?

"The Truth will make you free !" Truth. So spake he who brought this very dissension into the world. And though I did embrace his dogmas in a time of mental infirmity—they are not the support of the living, but rather of the dying—in addition to the old sources of hatred and passion, they hollowed out a fresh one, that of religious fanaticism. Pardon me for saying this ; but what is true for me if not what I feel to be so in my innermost soul ? And I promised you frankness : you know I despise adorning myself with the fine phrases of the age, saying one thing and meaning another. I feel the weight of your warnings, have not forgotten what responsibility I have accepted, and trust I shall only cast it from me when confronted by a higher duty. But like a citizen of a despotic government struggling for liberty, my hopes, my wishes are with the enemy of my country, even if I do not expect him to prevail.

Of course, my father, I will not throw any imputation upon that mysterious personage whom you and so many other worthy men reverence most devoutly ; but there remains the undeniable fact that Christianity has brought opposition between mind and body, between the ideal and the real into the world. If that separation was necessary to point out to us those two principles, it does not, nevertheless, accord with the nature of things at all.



And what a caricature has that idea of spiritualism become, the mind ruling the flesh ! We *teach* contempt for the world of sense, and all we *seek* is sensual enjoyment ; self-sacrifice for our fellow-man is declared to be the highest virtue, and we ridicule the man so silly as to let himself be made use of. We possess the authentic account of the future world of bliss, and in their crazy love for this earthly life of ours, people trample each other to death at the burning of a theatre, trample brother, sister, child. In London alone thousands perish annually of hunger, and the needy wretch commits a crime in order to secure even the shelter of the jail. All this takes place, BUT WE HAVE THE RIGHT FAITH : what do we need more ? WE ARE SAVED ! My God, never has this fiction seemed more detestable than now !— If here below ye can not emulate the greatness and wisdom of the Deity, can not found here a kingdom of love and peace, your whole doctrine is nothing but falsehood and deceit, your dreams of the future life a miserable recompense for hungry and distressed humanity ! Yes, father, we are ill, sorely ill, and it is therefore I ask so anxiously for the physician and the victim !

Will there be a new revelation for the sons of men ? It seems as if poor human wisdom will not be enough here, and if the Revelation of the Old Testament was not sufficient, and had to be increased or corrected by the New, why should not God in a time of renewed necessity renew his graciousness ? For our divided heart has crippled our whole character ; the race of manly heroes, who enjoyed their days on earth humanly, who took their fate from the hands of the gods without excess of joy or grief, that race has disappeared, and the sons of the barbarians step now over the earth with unsteady foot and reeling head !

Woe ! that your fathers tried to make you free men when they had not the truth themselves ; better had it been to have remained in the shackles of the Church, which at least allowed us to be men, if even materialists. But he who supports himself solely by his own strength, remains ever weak, whatever name he bears ; he remains an uncertain Idealist living on air and painfully lacking all substance, or worshipping sensual enjoyment, and from time to time pricked by the sting of his conscience !

.How long yet shall we be able to endure this torment, how long will it be before we Idealists fall, one after the other, at the feet of



that fearful Theocracy, which in return for the scanty truth we possess, deprives us of our dignity? How long will it be before Theocracy, slowly and surely strengthened by the weakness of the learned and the wants of the emotional, raises its mighty hand and drives the resisting remnant of humanity under the old yoke? Truly, it will do it, it must do it,—*unless the new Savior appears!*

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### LETTER XIII.

JANUARY 2D, 185—.

“WHY, uncle, did we pass so lightly, in our last conversation, over the proof of Messiah as contained in the Scriptures? It is on this especially that the Christians support themselves. And rightly so, I think; for if we have there a prophecy which has been literally fulfilled, there is a fact before us which far outweighs our historic truth, which, as you said, might be falsehood to-morrow.”

“I do not think I said that, Samuel; did I?”

“I believe those were almost your very words.”

“*Almost*, my son. We said so of your historical truths which you confessed were somewhat of a Protean nature. But I will not allow the same of the results we derived from history.”

“Oh, I do not wish to attack those: I indorse them only too readily. But answer my first question, will you please, and tell me your opinion of the Biblical proof. It concerns, you know, facts foretold most plainly in advance, and fulfilled most plainly by a certain person.”

My uncle looked at me almost sorrowfully for a time.

“Poor Samuel!” he said at length. “Poor child! What must you have suffered!”

I stared at him fixedly: I felt my heart dissolving and leaping in unruly emotion, I had almost thrown myself weeping into his arms, but I restrained myself convulsively. “No!” I muttered between

my teeth ; " fight to the end ! be cool, be firm ! Truth, and no emotion ! "

" You answer my question very strangely, uncle ! "

" Well, let me tell you a story I read lately. An African traveler came to a negro-village where an American trader had set up a warehouse. As our traveler is borne into the village, he hears a loud outcry, and perceives a Fetish-man or priest who holds, in the one hand, a doll adorned with gaudy rags, and in the other, a whip which he applies pretty vigorously to the poor idol. Round him is gathered the whole sable population of the village, staring in admiration of the priest's boldness. Our traveler learns that a knife has been stolen from a negro, who has recourse to the usual means of recovering his property through the agency of the sorcerer. The Fetish gets its whipping in order to make it exert itself and behave better in future. After it has received its punishment, it is set down near the warehouse, and the priest announces that the knife will be found to-morrow before dawn, lying at the side of the Fetish. The traveler laughs at this cool way of treating a God, takes up his quarters with the American, and goes to bed. You ask if the knife was really lost ? No, next morning, as the priest had predicted, it lay by the side of the puppet. The American had laid it there, in order, through the fame of the Fetish, to protect his warehouse against thieves."

" And this story, uncle ? "

" You may make what use of you please. Between ourselves, I hardly think the warehouse-goods were effectually protected against theft. The greater mass undoubtedly had witnessed the miracle too plainly with their own eyes to question the power of their Fetish ; but there may have been a few sly ones who saw through the trick, or who may have been too strongly tempted by the hope of plunder. Of one thing we may be sure : the first thief never betrayed who put the Messi——, I mean, the knife, there ! "

" I understand you, uncle ; you mean the narratives of the Evangelists were written so as to harmonize with the ancient prophecies."

" When we notice how evidently their miracles are fashioned after those of the Old Testament, and how many details—leaving that very peculiar genealogical tree out of consideration—are inserted only to fit some forced interpretation of a prophecy, we are almost driven to this supposition. And if our opponents stand by the ingenious ful-

fulfilment of certain ambiguous predictions, which no one who knows anything of Hebrew would dare to take in their literal sense, we can reply: 'See, Moses threatened us already: the dispersal over the whole earth has now really come to pass.' In addition to this, we have the plain and clear assurance, that if Israel turn to its God in fidelity, He will restore it to its former possession, and that from this fidelity the highest blessings will spring. This then we have yet to expect. We stand thus, too, upon the ground of literal fulfilment of prophecy, and do not need to fight about words. Only it is to the old Mosaic doctrine that we are to turn, and not to any new style, to any reformed one. Tell me, pray, where our teacher Moses—to whom be peace!—hints at an abolition of his law? On the contrary, it was given and ratified with the greatest possible solemnity; the most fearful curses are invoked on the head of its despisers. Well then, ye pious Professors, who seek to convince us from these Scriptures, ye believe yourselves that the Holy One—blessed be He!—gave these laws in person. If then this truth is of such all-surpassing importance that the Supreme intermitted the usual course of Nature for its sake, should the Eternal have changed his mind (!), He would have repealed that Law in just as plain and evident a manner. For He knows man is weak and prone to error. See too the Messiah of the new sect, even according to their own account, desires only to perfect the Law; not an iota of it will he abolish. Paul, it is true, does venture to draw his pen through it: well, perhaps he was a very learned man, a true saint, and a man of energy: but with all due respect, he is yet a little too small for me to allow him to destroy the Law of my everliving God!"

"But the resurrection, dear uncle, which is recounted by all the Evangelists, just like all facts narrated by eye-witnesses, with insignificant variation of detail?"

"Do we not frequently hear of men apparently dead, reviving; of suspended animation, as it is called? The question has been well asked, Why did not the risen Messiah show himself to his judges and the incredulous Pharisees, whom such a miracle would certainly have silenced? No, he appeared only to those who already believed in him. Samuel, I am sorry to see so little of the Lord's spirit rests on you that you ask for such reasons. What thinker ventures to found a deduction upon *one* historical event? Not even one carefully



observed natural phenomenon is sufficient : it must recur many times, and yield always exactly the same full result to every beholder : then may truth be founded on it. But you would ground the highest and most important dogma, one touching the interests of all humanity, upon an occurrence that is said to have happened to a few ignorant and superstitious men !”

“ Not I, uncle ; do not forget I am only putting the questions of the Christians.”

“ Do you not know, my son, that since Science has arisen among us, we do not recognize miracles as proofs ? That even Moses already warned us against it ? Are we to cast away the plain manifestation of God in our four thousand years of history, and swear by such fairy tales ? I will surrender all miracles, all of them ; the hoary old Talmud will not believe them, even if stone walls bend for proof ;<sup>7</sup> it will accept conviction only by argument. And even if that agreement between our prophecies and the Christian Messiah be not an artificial one, putting a literal meaning on words the prophets meant figuratively, or detecting a metaphysical import in every innocent detail—‘ spiritual interpretation,’ as they call it—if the most perfect harmony exist, and without human interposition : what would it prove ? Let Christians undeceive themselves : it would prove nothing ! I would answer, I give that up as a riddle which I do not understand, or rather say, those prophets were false ones, such we know were not lacking. Besides, the Talmud has already said : You must believe the prophet, even if he bid you transgress a command of Holy Scripture ; but *not* if he tell you to practice idolatry, even though he work a miracle to support himself, ay, even if he make the sun stand still in mid-heaven. For high above all, above prophets and prophecy, we hold the One God, the Creator of heaven and earth, Him who hath led us graciously to this day, who hath never withdrawn from us the breath of His spirit. He speaks yet to us, to whomsoever will hearken to Him, speaks in our own language ; we could no longer exist if we had but the old stock of inspiration to live on.”

He gazed with curiously fixed gaze on the ground before him.

“ Then you grant that all logical proofs are vain in the presence of deep emotion ; then are we all equal, Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, for among all are men of warm feelings to be found, each one has the truth : the genuine ring is not to be distinguished.”<sup>8</sup>



“ Each has *his own* truth, Samuel, certainly, and our sages recognized long ago that the Jewish faith was not necessary to blissful life, or if you will, to a blissful death; but such truth is only individual or rather subjective truth. The lunatic of whom Cicero tells, was extremely happy, because he imagined that all the ships which entered the port were his, while in reality of course they were not. Objective truth is ever the same, and I do not know how we could ascertain it without the aid of reason. As you say, all religions repose upon emotion, just as all buildings rest upon the earth, and you can see how dangerous it would be to omit the ground and foundation from examination. Do not forget that if you reject criticism, you reject the Reformation; it is only the Catholic who, in order to be able to swear to senseless dogmas, sacrifices his manliness and liberty, that can with some appearance of right, commit that deplorable error.

“ ‘Come on then,’ I would say to the Catholic, ‘I will not employ against you the argument of the early Protestants, that in rejecting reason, you actually use reason to authorize you. But come, let us journey back some eighteen hundred years, to the time when the world knew nothing of Protestants or Catholics, nor of what they even hold in common. Let us go to a Grecian city, Athens if you choose, or Ephesus, to any one the Apostle has entered to bring his joyful tidings to the heathens. Let us listen to the conversation of two men of that city who have just heard the stranger’s announcements.’

“ ‘This Jew’s address has made some impression upon me,’ says the younger man. ‘I do not care so much for the miracles he tells of: men, to gain their ends, are apt at times to invent such. But I can understand that the lofty doctrine he teaches, must, if generally accepted, secure the happiness of humanity. The life of this new god of his, too—which, by the way, reminds me of a good many old legends of ours—seems to me to be by far a more dignified one than the love-intrigues of our whole Olympus-full of deities.’

“ ‘Unhappy boy!’ we hear the old man reply. ‘Art thou too infected with this new poison of reform? Who art thou that thou dares with thy puny understanding fathom our deep doctrine of the gods, which our very wisest philosophers agree in recognizing as symbolical? Thou canst believe me: in the uneasy ups and downs of a mercantile life, I have seen that the gods confer their favor on him

who is able to select the proper sacrifice. Did not our mother Venus hear *thy* prayer but yesterday? In matters of religion, it becomes man to be submissive and humble: where we have no experience, we can have no opinion: and what fidelity can the new god expect, if we tear down the old gods from their altars, those who have protected us and our fathers so long?

"What would the modern Catholic answer the Heathen, Samuel? According to his principle, that reason is incompetent in matters of faith, he must give the heathen right for not embracing Christianity, for he too has plenty of miracles already. In good sooth, I know not how he would dare to reason with the Fetish-worshiper, who adores a piece of wood or stone. I do not doubt he would not be at a loss to say something, would have *words* ready, after the manner of the Church generally. He would speak probably of the working of the Holy Ghost, or something similar. But when we read that Augustine already bemoans that lucre was the motive of most conversions; when we see the desperate resistance the Saxons made to the Frank Charles and his Christianity; when we consider the mountains of corpses over which in every part of the earth the pious monk and the holy warrior climbed into heaven: we grow rather skeptical as to the sanctity of this spirit of conversion, and we make no ado of calling it in plain English, the spirit of Greed, of Ambition, and of Fanaticism."

"Since you recognize the rights of criticism, let us be consistent, uncle, and subject not only other systems, but our own to its test."

"Why not? We do not wish to protect our property by a species of taboo. If they are merely idols which we have borne from our fathers' dwellings, they shall not remain in the saddles of our camels; the diamond that can be scratched, deserves it."

I looked at him with astonishment. "You will not then interpret my arguments as presumption or frivolity?"

"I am confident that you are only concerned for the truth."

"Well then, uncle, of what use is Religion at all? People of late have amused themselves with making merry over the philosophers of the XVIII. century, who professed this opinion in sober earnestness. This seems to me a very unreasonable piece of presumption. Reason, really and truly, can not recognize Religion. You will confess, all codes are based on events, which, as you say, are the most uncertain

foundation for truth. They all demand, more or less, that I should accept and believe certain things which are utterly repugnant to my reason; they all demand the employment of certain forms, which have no necessity whatever, err therefore also against reason: wherever I look, I see this same opposition, and to speak sincerely, the question comes to be, whether I will surrender my religion, which I have only from outside, or my reason, which makes up my real personality."

"That is right, Samuel. But did I really say that events are the most uncertain foundation for Truth?"

"So I understood you, uncle."

"I do not reject the whole of our Natural Science. Can we doubt that water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen, when we know it has been decomposed times innumerable into these two gases, and that through their renewed combination, water has been reproduced, and even when we have made the experiment ourselves? True indeed, if the experiment had been performed only once and by one chemist, the matter would be doubtful yet. I spoke then of an event *reported* as having occurred *once*, Samuel, and did not refer to one frequently confirmed."

"I accept your correction, uncle; may I go on?"

"I am listening."

"First of all, I do not see how you can justify those Pharisaic forms before the throne of reason. What are their results but sanctimoniousness, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy? No one certainly believes now that he pleases God by eating such and such a viand, or abstaining from this and that food."

"Perhaps he does, Samuel!"

"That visiting the Synagogue daily makes the pious man, or denies that a man prays in his own chamber more devoutly than in a large assembly."

"*Can* pray, Samuel."

"*Can*, if you will. But tell me, what is more unworthy of a free man, what more silly, I must say it, than *appointing a set time for daily prayers*."

"Almost as silly, Samuel, as appointing set hours for *daily meals*; for breakfast or for dinner."

"As if prayer," I continued, not heeding him, "as if prayer were

not a voluntary act, and not a mechanical performance which can be executed at any moment. Lips only and not thoughts form such words. But when the soul rises to higher regions, or is sore distressed and tears itself from all that is earthly, and trembling and fluttering seeks its Comforter : then one prays, without words at all maybe, and we may assert, that if ever human thoughts and expressions reach the Supreme Being, such devotion is the most acceptable offering."

"Now answer me, Samuel, how often daily do you feel in the praying mood?"

"Daily, uncle? You are mocking: certainly not daily."

"Weekly then."

"I will not venture to say weekly."

"Monthly then, surely."

"Perhaps a few times a month, but often a whole month may pass away, yes, and perhaps month after month, without my finding myself in the proper mood."

"And you have always had business occupation which precluded you from such meditation, drew you from an inner mental life: care for your dear ones deprived you of sleep, toil for your daily bread oppressed your mind?"

"Not at all, uncle. You know I had no one to provide for, and through my adopted father's kindness, always had more money than I needed."

"But then the charms of sensuality ruled over you from your youth. Your palate was your God, and the unchaste conversation of your companions furnished you relaxation from immoral pursuits."

"What do you mean, sir?" I asked angrily.

"Answer yourself, my son. You are a man fitted by Nature to be of a reflective, meditative turn; a man who by reason of fortunate circumstances in life, enjoys the privilege of being able to satisfy his thirst for knowledge, a man without sorrows and almost without passions; yet you are able to glow with recognition of the Almighty's goodness and love to you only a few times in a year! What then shall become of the harnessed artisan, who, fettered to his employer's chain, longs for the hour of release, to find recompense for his tedious toil in the gratification of his senses? What of the weary and worn merchant, whom figures buzz around like swarming wasps, whose position



risers and falls with innumerable circumstances and events, not alone beyond his control, but beyond his calculation? Do you know what it is to bear a weight of trouble on your heart, which the more you shake it off, falls back again with the greater weight, and draws its iron yoke the closer? Where then is your elevated mood? Whence shall these wretches seek inspiration? Do you think that I do not also consider the heartfelt prayer for real devotion? Read the mechanical prayers of your forefathers, as you call them, and see whether they lack lofty vehemence! They possessed such feeling in the highest degree, because it was *daily fostered*. If to your other habits, to which you, in common with all men, are subservient, you do not add that of praying, they infallibly will gain entire ascendancy over you: for the owner of the house, who inhabits it continually, is stronger therein than the casual guest. Be warned, my son, against founding your life upon an exception: your exalted mood will either forsake you entirely, or take whole and sole possession of you, making you a blind fanatic. Remember the example of a new sect, whose striving for an entirely spiritual life has developed into the most flagrant sensuality."

"But why pray at all, uncle?"

"What, Samuel?"

"Understand me rightly, uncle! I wish only to follow the road you yourself pointed out: let us see whither it will lead. You know you asserted the right of reason in matters of religion. Now reason, I hold, can not recognize prayer. Do we not therein ascribe to the Supreme Being such qualities of our own as we deem the best, in increased measure? Now, to whom do you pray? To the All-Good, to the All-Just: but to demand love or mercy from the ideal of strict justice is, to say the least, an absurdity: what we deserve, that, and naught else, we shall receive. Our words might touch or move an earthly master, none other. Nay, every honest thinker must allow that prayer is rather an insult offered to the Deity. Shall the Laws of Nature cease to work because I pray, or be altered in my favor? You see reason can not accept prayer."

"And is that all the honest thinker's reason has to say?"

"I am afraid, perhaps it has said too much already."

"Oh, not at all, Samuel. Let it do its best, I give you as much ground as you choose."

"Well, uncle, as you will: I am curious to see how you will get the better of reason. The deeper thinker, then, will reject all prayer, supplicatory as well as laudatory. For he can only smile, too, at that species of adulatory wheedling which we offer to the Lord of all things, somewhat in the style of Oriental slaves. Herewith then all religious forms fall away as useless, or at least, as matters of no importance; a pure heart knows no other service——"

"*Heart?* You mean *reason* of course, Samuel."

"Well, a heart enlightened by reason, like Spinoza's. Indeed, he who obeys that philosopher's *Justitia* and *Caritas*, is the true servant of God, call him Christian, Jew, Buddhist, or Brahman. Before the researches of reason, all the legends of revelation are alike contemptible, and I can not convince myself that the petty forms of the petty man are pleasing to a Being who extends through all worlds: if such a Being exist."

"If such exist, Samuel?"

"Yes, if such exist. I said so, for in my reason I can not conceive it. Lord Bacon was right when he warned men against metaphysical brain-cudgeling, like Confucius against theological. Do we even understand all sublunary things? Do we not see a brazen wall on all sides of the Knowable, inexorably closing the way to every ultimate cause? What if that convergence of all ways into one point is only a pretty fable? What if our minds as well as our bodies are doomed to wander on a sphere, and the wall is only there to prevent our seeing that our road runs merely round and round that sphere? Who can deny that logical thought leads us to this view, without escape? The laws which govern humanity had to be presented to a simple generation from an outside source: *we* are able to trace them *in* ourselves. Like us, every chain of beings obeys its certain and especial laws, every series of things perfects the mechanism deposited therein, and all with iron necessity: development and decay renew themselves in existence, with wearying monotony, and it is only our conception of things weaves into them an idea of freedom. Wherever I look, in the motion of the ocean, of the atmosphere, in our wars, in every class of hostility; in crime and in love, everywhere this same iron countenance of Necessity stares me in the face! And the *rôle* of your Almighty God——"

"No mockery, young man!" my uncle cried, with darkened brow.

"Far be it from me to mock what has made me so unhappy. But how great can be the interference of the Deity in a world that is so perfectly arranged, that it carries itself on; a world that perhaps, as Anaxagoras thought, needed only a first impulse and since that, nothing; for it bears in itself all that is wanting—eternal, immutable *law*!"

"Anything more?" said uncle.

"I have but a little to add. The causes that gave rise to religion in human nature have been well described by the ingenious German philosopher, and as just I gave myself up to the search after Truth with holy earnestness, I did not shrink from following up the results of ideas to their furthest limits."

"You? I thought it was Reason that was speaking?"

"Why shall I conceal that I am uttering thoughts which are old acquaintances of mine? Let me henceforth speak in my own name. This last deduction robbed me of the last remnant of my courage; I was terribly dissatisfied with the result of my inquiry. Who can say into what ultimate fibres of our nature the spirit of the age rules over us; I probably obeyed it first, where I least expected it. I embraced a religion, chiefly because I foresaw that I should once have need of it. For the time it worked like an opiate. But one thing——"

"If you have the consciousness of speaking the truth, speak out."

"Well then, if a man accept a religion, it must at least satisfy the demands of morality as near as may be; if anything can decide the relative value of religions, it must not be dogmas, about which we shall always be uncertain, but morality; and which religion can compare in point of morality with Christianity? Both theoretical and practical——"

"Therefore?" said uncle.

"Therefore, the friend of humanity can not hold it justifiable that one nation should shut itself off persistently from the life of its fellows!"

"Oh, our nation shuts itself off, eh! Samuel?"

"Is it justifiable that this people, raising itself in empty pride over its more advanced neighbors, sinks ever deeper into decrepitude and dullness? Who, in these days, will dare to call that heroic bravery, which just history condemns as obstinacy and self-will?"

Who will commend a fidelity that wars against its proper master? For what are we hoping, and who would follow the Redeemer from these seats of culture and civilization, into deserted Palestine? The Redeemer? *Never* will he appear, except we find him in ourselves! We ourselves shall free ourselves from our ancient superstition and degradation, shall teach ourselves to be men among men, and to work as industriously in the modern world, at mankind's great labor, as our fathers did for the education of humanity in the old."

"What I have to answer you, Samuel," said the Rabbi, who had been walking to and fro with his arms crossed behind him, "is not much. You know nothing of Judaism, and it can not be taught by preaching. We leave that to the religions of words: Judah speaks through deeds. I need scarcely repeat to you the saying of the old teacher:—'Study the law and its commentaries,' for, as you say, you already possess its moral code in a corrected edition. When you have learned with what spirit those lofty Sages were imbued, how mightily they worked, then come to me again, and we will judge their teachings. And indeed, if I were not sorry for you——"

"I ask no pity, uncle——"

"Away with that sneering smile, unhappy boy!" he cried, raising his hand warningly on high: "do you imagine I know not the worm that gnaws at your heart, at yours as well as that of this whole generation? Outside they are fair and ruddy to look at, like rosy fruit; inside they are foul and rotten! Yes, out of pity, your *uncle* speaks to you, for the *Jewish Rabbi* has naught to reply to your impious words! 'Go!' he would say, 'go to the strangers after whom your heart lusteth! Purchase remorse as cheaply as you can, it will cost you dear enough! Israel has no use for these wise men who have forgotten what the beginning of all wisdom is!<sup>10</sup> The sooner such mortifying limbs are separated from the body, the better for it.' But why should I be angry with you, my son? Is it not the mission of our people to live among the nations? The most brilliant gem becomes covered with dust, the mirror with stains, if it be not cleaned: and is not our choicest virtue justice, even toward the stranger? I know not, Samuel, whether you have the strength to understand me and act according to my words. The ideas and manner of thinking which you have acquired, you must now cast



off, you must shatter the world of appearances you have erected in your brain, try to examine new ideas with zeal, and to comprehend them, and when you have done so, carry them out with energy. Life is only action, my son. Those semi-men, the Sages of the Study, must be our abomination: he who does not act as he thinks, does not think what he says. You, poor boy, have not had a Jewish training, or if you have had it, have lost all its good effects in your intercourse with strangers. You have acquired the Heathen's custom of separating God from the world. With your *savants*, you seek for the laws of things, and when you have found them, with your finger before your eyes, you demand, like them, 'Where is God?' Fools! You observe an unfailing connection of cause with effect, and because, on further examination, the cause is seen to be the effect of some other prior cause, and as a series of middle links, which to the confined sight of the human observer is unlimited, is revealed, you believe you must deny the activity of the necessary ultimate cause. As if the most complicated movements of a piece of machinery must not all be referred at last to the motive agency, that is, to the fire in the boiler; but first of all, Samuel, answer me a question: Are you happy in the doctrine of the stranger, through which, it seems, you seek to effect the happiness of your people? Is the change to Heaven a recompense for this desert earth?"

"You are joking, uncle. Even men like Goethe can boast but of scant happiness. Who knows whether this life, in the last resort, is success or failure? Whom among us does it not belie in our youth, deceive in our old age? To what end is the paint on its visage, with which we mortals fall in love? Oh, Nature is cruel toward us, very cruel! Shall I recount to you the blissful dreams, the joyous anticipations of my youth which I have destroyed? Because nothing thereof was fulfilled, I shattered my soft nature, and after I had made trial of every species of reality, I felt, oh, so bitterly I felt, that I was no more susceptible of those feelings which are more blissful than reality itself!"

"O you Shadow-prince of the poet!" said my uncle, "preferring painted pasteboard landscapes to Nature, rendered happy by a moonshine night or a lime-light sunrise on the stage; whose nerves are not strong enough to bear the sublimity of a real bright night, too feeble to sustain the light of the real sunbeam!"

Oh, how right he was! And was it because he was so right that I exclaimed, almost tauntingly: "And you, do you live then in the reality, are you happy in it?"

"*I am!*" he cried with beaming countenance, "*I am*, in spite of all the trials the Lord has caused me to endure! The true Jew is happy. Oh, would that all strangers heard me! Would that my voice resounded over the whole earth!"

He paused suddenly, a light shadow passed over his face. Was he thinking of his lost son? Then with softened voice he continued:

"You asked me something, my child?"

I was deeply moved without knowing why. "Who is a *true Jew*, uncle?"

"I can not say, Samuel," he replied, shaking his head; "certainly not now. We Jews are scarcely able to say at all. Let us wait till the nations who now despise us, recognize us, and there will be no lack of friends to proclaim our qualities. We have inherited a paralyzed tongue from our teacher, Moses; like him, I feel the glow of the holy fire, but I lack the man Aaron, with his clear head and warm heart, to speak to the people. You must know, Samuel, it often makes me feel sad that I have no son of the same disposition as myself. Benjamin is a good young man, but needs the spur of truth. Our ancestors did not trust the vanity of books: our great teachers were satisfied to hand down their words to their scholars by word of mouth. The 'living word' was ever the source of instruction in Israel, from our revered teacher Moses down to the present time. Not that I lay any claim to be a sage among our people, but behind me there lies a whole lifetime, full of observation and study, and after all, I shall have to take the fruits of my toil with me to the grave!"

"But do you not teach in the *Beth Hamedrash* (college)?"

"Certainly. But what I teach there, I teach as religious and not as philosophical instruction. For that, a higher grade of education than my scholars possess would be necessary. They are from the lowest classes of the people."

"Why do not the educated take part therein?"

"Because they ape the Christians!"

"Then they are not cultured?"

"They are merely like their models."

"But uncle, *why* ought we not to learn from the Christians?"

"Because we can learn little good from them."

"Nay, that is going too far!" I cried.

"You are right: we have gone too far from our path, it is time to return. Hero I am standing quite unprotected from the heavy fire of your deductions. Tell me now, Samuel, do you think it *rational* that we should pass almost a third part of this brief life of ours in a state resembling death? 'This lofty being, man!' as the poet says." And he took down a volume of Shakespeare from a shelf. "Where does poor Hamlet praise us sons of man?"

"In the graveyard scene, I think."

"No, that would be severe in our noble poet: he is not writing a satire, Samuel; no, here it is, in the fitting place; in the scene with the shallow courtiers, the sage rightly reminds them that they too have their share in humanity. It runs: 'What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form, in moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a God! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!' (*Hamlet*, act ii., sc. 2.) And this beauty, this paragon," he continued, laying the book aside, "gets sleepy, rubs his eyes; for the planet in her semi-revolution has so shaken this angel that he must fain creep into his bed to recruit his strength! Why dost thou pause in thy search after the truth, O mighty thinker? Why dost thou let the irretrievable moments glide away unused in the attainment of thy highest aim, Self-culture? But hush! the demigod lies there and slumbers, just like his dog or his cat; perhaps even longer!

"At another time, too, he is occupied with the regular nutrition of his body, and fulfills functions which are unworthy of his pure reason. A consistent metaphysician would have abolished them (if he could) long ago. Ay, it is even said that this wonderful being, who, in this century, as is well known, has solved all the mystery of the world's government, suffers from foul diseases; of course painlessly, for the Stoics, you know, long since banished pain from the world. It is positively asserted too, only think, that even the greatest philosophers grow old and weak, and their intellect begins to play a game of hide-and-seek with them, soon leaving them, most disrespectfully, in the lurch! People do say, too, that then the illustrious lord of the world becomes transformed into an ill-odorous presentment of a

man, which his relatives dispose of as quickly as possible in order to forget——”

“But, uncle, stop!” I cried, half laughing, half appalled.

“Am I not right?” he cried with up-lifted hand; “where Law is so evident and Necessity is plainly seen, your wise intellect shrugs its shoulders, so to speak, and your boasted liberty patiently lays the chain round its neck. But when the governing Law is not so patent, and when it appears more as a huge general principle than as definite and special instances, your intellect would wish us to be satisfied then with its own certificate, drawn up by itself and signed by our five senses! You laugh at the Stoic who proves to you that pain is not an evil, and yet, in the same breath, demand a *reason* for Religion!”

“But what in the world has sleep or bodily pain to do with Religion, dear uncle?”

“Let us go a step farther. What is your opinion concerning language? Was it invented by men, or communicated to them from without?”

“Invented, evidently.”

“Invented, do you mean, as the result of long and intelligent cogitation, like the steam-engine, or like printing?”

“Certainly not.”

“How then?”

“Men must have received the disposition to speak, innately, like certain animals possess certain artistic impulses or instincts.”

“I understand. May I call that disposition, it being a distinctive mark in all men, differing in character, an ‘*idea*,’ as Plato styles it?”

“As you will.”

“We will say then, men possess language by a natural necessity or law, and call this idea, a law of human nature. Do you agree?”

“Perfectly.”

“Do you agree too, that there is such a thing as a political idea, too?”

“What do you understand by the expression?”

“Well, we see that all nations live in States; some in the rudest and simplest rudiments of such organization, others in a high degree of perfection. Is this shape of human society accidental, or are we to hold, with Aristotle, that it is necessarily so?”

“We must evidently agree with Aristotle.”



"Shall we say then, that men have the inborn disposition to form States, as you maintain they have to form language?"

"Certainly."

"What is your opinion then of those agitators in this country, who advocate anarchy or abolition of States, as the highest aim of politics? Or of the French Socialists, who, with their Utopia, would abolish the State? Do they not involuntarily resemble that fellow in the fable who tried to accustom his ass to live on nothing?"

"I grant that."

"There exists then a human law of Nature which we can call the political idea?"

"Yes."

"One thing more, Samuel, what do you think of love: is that a law of Nature too?"

"Undoubtedly."

"A human law too, Samuel? The tender ties of family, the fervent affection of the friend for the friend, of the citizen for his fellow-citizen, and finally of one human being for another: all these then are not creations of the intellect?"

"Who would dare assert they are?"

"Do you not think there could be a man, who, scantily endowed by Nature with sympathy for his fellows, either through necessity or through wrong inflicted, could become their enemy? One who would laugh at you in mockery if you speak to him of pure love and its miracles of self-sacrifice, for he knows only the animal prompting, the only species he feels."

"Even such a monster, through instruction and moral improvement, would at last attain the perception that love exists in the family and in society as a Law of Nature; although I scarcely think it would be necessary actually to prove this to any one."

"Well," uncle continued, smiling, "the aim of the German philosophers to explain the whole origin of all things out of the intellect, while in truth their germs lay in quite another locality, would soon have robbed us of family in its results. But we will not digress: tell me what I ought to do with those who, like our unsympathizing monster, lack all *religious* sentiment? Would you not tell them that the universal and unvarying veneration of some higher Being, which exists, as far as we know, all over the earth, necessarily points

to a Natural Law, to a religious *idea*? That he who has not yet experienced this Law is separated from the circle of humanity, and is just as much to be pitied as he whom no affection ties to this earth?"

"You are right," I answered. "Religion, God be thanked, is a Law of our Nature."

"But see what we have omitted, Samuel. We spoke of the idea of Language, of State, of Family, and have not yet even proved that there exist such things as Language, State, Family!"

"What would be the use of proving what we can see with our own eyes?"

"But suppose I denied them?"

"Then a proof could not help you. Evident facts can not be proved."

"You are right, Samuel; but is there no means of convincing ourselves of their truth?"

"Surely: through perception."

"You do not then demand, my son, that I should prove to you the existence of God, but agree with those philosophers who asserted that the logical reasons to prove his existence, if they were true, would prove exactly the opposite. If you have not perceived God, we will put off our discussion a few years. Who could prove the Pythagorean problem if the first principles of our experience\* were called in question? Go then and study Nature, and recognize therein, even with our imperfect results and data, the wondrous convergence of all particular, of all special laws to one universal, all-embracing one. Study the history of your life, of your people, and of the nations. However distorted be the guise in which we mortals delineate the vast features of the world's ruling power, the eternal aim forces its victorious passage through all our selfish motives!"

"You misunderstood me, uncle. I only sought to show the inconsistencies of Reason's results. As concerns myself, I can solemnly declare I am convinced of the existence of God."

"Religion then rests upon a natural Law of humanity. What a curious age this is, when such a common-place proposition has to be fully discussed. But yet your philosophers will reject the idea as being not in accordance with Reason: they can get along, as they

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\* The so-called Axioms of Geometry.—Tr.

say, without the religious *symbol*. But I would wish to know which Law of Nature *is* according to Reason? Natural laws are not laws of reasoning. The human mind does not fit the nature of external things, for nature is, as the poet says, both husk and kernel. Our reason can only comprehend it by dissecting what is really one into a number of apparent parts. When then he submits to the general laws governing animals, he must submit too to those especially referring to men. He may only demand that these ideas convince him of their existence. We can not insist upon comprehending all facts; we must be satisfied with perceiving them. I, for instance, can not comprehend the nature of what we call Heat, although its properties and effects are well known to me. Yet who would presume to deny the existence of heat? It is true, a good many philosophers, led away by the malady of the age, delight in explaining religion away, as merely a human weakness—a weakness, at all events, as necessary as sleep, or rather, like the necessity for Love, or for a State. As long as we retain these, as long as our fate depends in part upon causes over which we have no control—that is, in a word, as long as we remain men, so long will we have to suit ourselves to our ideas. Why, it must be pretty evident, I should say, that we shall have reached the highest pitch of cultivation only when we have developed these ideas to our utmost ability, not when we have extinguished them. It is an old saying, and a true one: He only can conquer Nature who submits to her? Do you agree with me as far as I have gone?"

"I do."

"Sum up then what we have arrived at."

"We have found that the universal Laws of Nature, and of human nature, are not laws of Reason, and that religion is such an idea of Nature."

"Good; and with what intention did we start?"

"Why," I exclaimed, in surprise, "did you not undertake to prove the competency of Reason in religious matters, and have we not proved just the opposite?"

"Indeed, Samuel? Let us examine this position too. Do you not think the police a stupid invention? Is it not to every one's interest to fulfill his citizen's duty and live without quarreling with his fellows?"

"But, uncle, as long as men continue to dwell together, they will always stand in need of an impartial, regulative authority."

"That is true; and must they live together?"

"Do you not think so, uncle?"

"Certainly; but just look at standing armies: what huge extravagance! With the half of the money we annually expend on that sanguinary institution, I would undertake to root out pauperism."

"Under the present state of affairs, States can not dispense with standing armies; political independence must be of higher value to a people than meat and bread, than even life."

"Since then the State may be threatened, I must put up with the standing army. But who protects families that they shall not swallow one another in feud and enmity?"

"Society, which unites us all together in amity."

"But, my dear Samuel, I should rather fear for this Society of yours. Our town has evidently other interests at heart than those of the neighboring town."

"But all are subject to the State which compels them to live in obedience to the law."

"Once more, Samuel. Why can not these States lay down their arms, like Society and the family have already done?"

"I suppose there must be some higher authority in these latter which compels peace, and which is lacking in the former."

"So it would appear. But *is* there no higher authority?"

"Do you mean the Church?"

"O Samuel, let us rather say Religion, not Church. It is true the Church did at one time unite almost all European States: would that we had lived in those glorious times of *unarmed peace*!"

"Mock away, uncle! They were the times of everlasting war, of licensed violence!"

"Indeed, did the Infallible One in Rome fail so egregiously? That is why I said Religion, instead of Church. With religion proper, violence must cease; States become mere men then. And so Religion, it seems, has its work yet to be done. But we have again digressed. Let us return to our police and standing armies. If you only knew, Samuel, how much misery is owing to the police in the last centuries, how especially they have debased the character of the Germans, that nation once so manly, so bold: and yet you are as little disposed to yield the necessity for them as for standing armies which devour the very marrow of the land."



"Certainly not, unless we give up the State as well."

"Well, I know not what to say. I intended to propose the abolition of the State, which so often oppresses the people, while it supports itself by their labor."

"I do not understand you."

"Well, only a fool can doubt that if the State has to be maintained, certain forms must necessarily be kept up."

"Certainly, only a fool."

"Now what a funny fellow you are! Were you not going to show me how useless, nay, how detrimental are law and divine service? And when I prove the same to you of police and armies, you smile as at things which every child knows better!"

"But uncle, are the circumstances the same in both?"

"If Religion is a natural idea like that of State——"

"Yes, on that we were agreed."

"External form is then as necessary to the one as to the other?"

"Certainly, necessary to all existing things."

"You will no longer stigmatize my poor prayer then, as Pharisaism, or worse yet, as hypocrisy?"

"I retract the expression; it was hasty."

"And the study of ancestral law and tradition: do you look upon it now with milder eyes?"

"If it is becoming in us to have a religion, it is becoming that we should live up to it: I must grant that."

"Take care you do not grant too much. Does not the Pillar-saint live up to his religion?"

"But not in a rational manner."

"Standing armies are also not rational."

"Not rational, but indispensable to the welfare of the State."

"If they do not sacrifice the life of the whole organism for the sake of a single function. Although then you demand a police, you would not be satisfied with such a one as that of the Bourbons in Naples."

"I detest such with my whole soul."

"But how shall we avoid the Pillar-saints—I mean to say, the Neapolitan police?"

"What is easier in a free and constitutionally-governed State?"

"What makes such a State?"

"What besides the law?"

"Now there again I am at sea. Whence do these good laws come?"

"Men frame them."

"Oh, men: not inspired prophets?"

"Certainly not. Our members of parliament make no claim to prophetic dignity; they are sensible men who frame laws according to their own judgment of what is useful, and the dictates of their own common sense."

"They could ultimately, then, change the form of government?"

"Certainly; our Parliament has changed our government to a constitutional monarchy."

"And could make it a Republic if such seemed better?"

"At all events they tried that once."

"And how is it with language, Samuel? Who should decide whether High or Low German, whether the Tuscan or the Roman dialect is to be preferred as the national tongue?"

"Evidently the verdict of those who are versed in the matter."

"But I suppose such a verdict dares not influence our Divine Worship, as, for instance, whether it should consist of prayer, or sacrifice, or mass, or congregational singing?"

"Why, certainly. It is exactly the same as with language."

"And you said we might choose among the various forms of government?"

"Surely."

"And not whether Catholicism or Protestantism, whether Judaism or Christianity is to be preferred as a religion?"

"I must grant that too."

"Tell me, would you not laugh if a tyrant were to try to protect himself by making his subjects believe, all order would cease with the fall of his absolutism? And if some one were to assert that reason dares not raise its voice in affairs of religion, would he have a right to complain of tyranny? And again: did you not say, if we must accept one religion, the purest code of morals ought to decide which?"

"I did, and say so yet."

"I once had a friend who thought the republican the best form of government. He went to America to seek a new home under the

Star-spangled banner. After a few years he returned. On my questioning him he answered, that in future he would venture an opinion upon things actually existing, only after a practical trial of them, and no more theoretically! Shall we remain satisfied now with what we have found to-day? Namely, that Reason can not abrogate the laws of Nature which it did not frame, but that its province is to superintend and guide their working?"

"I am well satisfied therewith, uncle, for I have learned something; but I must challenge what you said about theory and practice."

"I did not intend it to pass unchallenged, Samuel."

"Good, uncle. But when I admit that Christianity contains much that is opposed to Reason, you must grant me its higher moral excellence. As to the fact that men do not act up to the height of their principles, who will dare to be the first one to cast the stone?"

"Yes," replied my uncle, "the hangman is as bad as the wench he lashes. You can prove that to me from King Lear. But enough philosophizing: we will investigate high morality at some future time.

"If you would like to listen, I will narrate something of my adventures among the nations when a youth. Some letters I wrote to a deceased friend of mine were returned to me, and I have kept them as reminiscences."

He rose, and after some search in his desk, drew forth a parcel of faded papers which I eyed with curiosity. After he had opened a few and refolded them, he handed me a page, and I read in a clear handwriting as follows:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND:—I have been now just a year on my travels, and according to promise, have written to you pretty frequently. But my innermost thoughts, I must confess, I kept concealed from you. You rightly complain that I only speak of the learned men and large cities I visit, and are anxious because I say nothing about myself. Hear then, what troubled me. Do you remember how you used to warn me against the strange books when we went to the Talmud-school together? When I saw it grieved you, I used to read them only in secret, for I yearned to learn the truth. Those works which were published by the priests as their Holy Scriptures, made an impression upon me. It is true, nothing could be more childish than their doctrines and their logic, but their lofty morality!

‘Surely,’ I would exclaim, ‘my Gentile brethren must be more like angels than men!’

“I could not get to know them nearer in our town, for we were stringently separated from each other; but when I go traveling, I said, I will learn from them how to be a man, and to live as holily as they do. Now I am afoot: you know how we Talmud-scholars travel. The weight of our purses does not inconvenience us much. Let me tell you now what I did and what I experienced.

“When I entered a town, I used to go first to the house of a Christian to beg; and when they drove me roughly away, I used to stand for hours at a distance, and wait till a poor man of their own creed came up. For, said I to myself, our brother Esau is violent, and has forgotten that you are his brother; but if one of his faith should come, he will open his heart to him in compassion, and his hand with gifts. So I waited till Gentile beggars came out of the house whence I had been driven, and asked them what success they had had. Very often they had driven them away like me, often dismissed them with meagre charity. But I found out that these blind men could really see well enough, and that those who pretended to be lame, were hale and hearty, and I said then: Such impostors deserve harshness from the rich. If the poor are so worthless, it is no wonder men are judged according to their money. And I no longer blamed the police when I saw them persecute the beggar like a criminal—a sight which used to make my heart bleed. I was no longer impatient of their passport-vexations, but I saw the really helpless old man, imprisoned as a vagrant, gaze longingly at the sunshine they had robbed him of, behind the jail walls; the wretched cripple creeping along the streets and catching at halfpence, and in the winter’s bitterest cold, the woman sitting on the stone steps, suckling children, in order to attract the passers-by. Alas! What is in their books is one thing, what exists in their world is quite another.

‘Shuddering at the heartlessness of the well-to-do and the deception of the poor, I sought out the dwellings of our people, and though I had lived the whole week, while traveling, on dry bread and a couple of onions, when I entered a synagogue on a Friday evening, how often have two rich Israelites disputed who should take the poor stranger home that night. The successful one would take me into his well-lighted dining-room, and give me the seat of honor, while



the lady of the house would assist me before her husband. After the meal, I would show my host it was no ignoramus that had partaken of his hospitality, and the whole company would like to listen to a specimen of my Scriptural explanation. And when I had taken my Sabbath meal there next day, and was dismissed, not without a little something towards my traveling expenses, as I reached the gate of the city, I would stop and pronounce a blessing on the righteous inhabitants." This was end of the letter.

"Have you had enough, Samuel?"

"Oh, no; let me read more of your experience."

He handed me another sheet, and I read:—

"While journeying alone, I often pondered on what I had seen and heard, and I accused myself at times of being prejudiced through my love to my people. So when I entered another city, I would go into one of the churches, and listen to a service from beginning to end. I was afraid and trembled, even when I entered their buildings, whose very style of architecture made a chilling, weird impression on me. Their painted and carved images stared at me in surprise, the churchgoers too, shaking their heads, wondered what the Jew wanted in their sanctuary. But I did not care for their astonishment, nor did I account it a sin. I wanted to hear with my own ears, and see with my own eyes. I stood afar off and did not kneel. In Catholic countries, I heard them pronounce the Latin words they did not understand, and I noticed the jugglery of the whole service, and saw that God had perished from their dead symbols, their images, and from their living ones, the priests. I fled like a madman from the scene of abomination and said: 'Rome, Rome! We have not yet outlived thee! People believe thou art dead, but in reality thou hast only drawn a mask before thy heathen countenance! And still dost thou subjugate the world with violence and immorality as of yore!' And I bathed and washed my garments, and it lasted weeks before I was rid of my disgust.

"Then I tried again and went to the Protestant churches. Here I heard the ministers publicly proclaim what the Catholics wisely kept silent. I saw how they audaciously denounced Divine Reason, and I said, 'Lord! Thou hast doomed them to destruction, for thou hast deprived them of reason!' They rave in extolling their God, but e enlightened people draw themselves away from them, and soon

there will be only those worshipers of the altar who live by the altar. Their educated classes have withdrawn themselves from it, their uneducated ones consider the whole history a fable: only the government supports it. The government and necessity. For they are ashamed to retrace their steps, and they are ignorant of the road ahead. The Catholics possess no longer a deity, but they have a divine service: the Protestants lack both. Their religion exists only among their theologians, and the people are guided either by the principles of philosophical morality, or only according to their personal interests: the former are Heathens unknown to themselves, the latter know they are.

“When I found the life of my Gentile brethren was a godless one, when I saw their poverty of heart, I shuddered and could not believe it. The splendor of their words and the echo of their cheerfulness had intoxicated me, and I would not believe that they were so small and poor.

“Since I have been at the University, I have been seeking new experience. I hear lectures now, and mingle quite freely with my fellow-students. They like to tease me with my religious scruples in the matter of food, but I am accustomed to that now. I have been visiting prisons and orphan asylums too. Of the former I will not speak; but why do they shut up the pale orphans from all social intercourse, and mark them as if they were convicts? Why are they shy and without liveliness? Everywhere the same flaunting words of love, and everywhere the same heartlessness in deed! But I was going to tell you of my fellow-students. I have become intimate with many of them, sit with them till deep into the night, drinking beer and wine. I go with them into the taprooms where they dance, and have even courage enough to visit families with them. Yes, they are quite different men from us, have quite other eyes, and other hearts, other minds, and another conscience. The consumption of of spirituous liquors to which they are daily addicted, holds their sensual cravings in continual tension, and actually makes them boast of their debauchery in wretched pride.

“They have three different codes of morality: one for society and family intercourse, another for the circle of their intimates, and a third for their own secret soul. In their youthful days they learn the principles of their religion and morality by heart, and in Society their memory does them good service. There they are nothing but

saints, honorable and estimable young men who almost deem it a sin to take any species of indulgence. The erring brother is pierced most mercilessly with their sharp tongues, with their gall-steeped pens. Although each one knows himself thoroughly, they yet think they are able to deceive each other with such hypocrisy; for what one is thought about, is for them the chief concern of life. In the private circles of these young men, as I have opportunity of observing, this mask is dropped, and every excess is allowed, even required, as long as it is accompanied with a certain air of good fellowship: and I who have no gallant adventure to narrate, sit there and am laughed at. The third species of morality is that which reveals itself in their deeds. They confess it only to themselves, and it is called, taking advantage of your neighbor, using him. To prosecute their personal interests they make contracts of friendship, welcome you to their houses with the utmost kindness, are the most pleasant people imaginable, as long as they can make any use of you. If you are of no utility to them any more, they forget all about you over night. This debased selfishness not only hardens their hearts against the poor, but one brother evinces violent hostility to another as soon as money interests are concerned. These children wait and watch for the death of their parents impatiently, allow them to rot in poverty, and one actually sees the hand of the son raised against the father. These are the results of the New Testament attempt at uprooting all self-interest from the world!

I had continued to read with increasing agitation: my voice almost refused its office when I had reached the end. There before me lay the world, the same world that had caused me so much torture! Yes, that was it, that was it!

"Do you see how passionately Youth was disposed to view all things?" said my uncle. "A good deal is exaggerated, do you not think so?"

I made no answer, only "Thanks, dear uncle, for your patience and instruction. You have enriched me." "*Lacerated*," I was going to say, but I suppressed it, and hurried from the room.

Will you forgive me for forgetting my New-Year's greeting?

## LETTER XIV.

JANUARY 14TH, 185-.

WHAT did that Jewish king call the world? Was it not "a bone without marrow"? It is so. We are the dogs breaking our teeth trying to pierce the bone, and those who succeed in penetrating it, find it hollow!

Pardon these words: if there is any one who detests sentimentality and display of suffering, I am certainly that one. I am wroth with myself. Gnashing my teeth, I would fain bite the dark spot from my breast, where the secret sting pierces me. And yet a thousand times have I repeated to myself, that it is silly imagination, a foolish mania, to fret and harass one's self I know not wherefore, to feel pain at a nonentity, a trifle, a nothing. Oh yes, I am very sensible, very sensible: but I fear my feelings will never acquire any such good sense. I am at one and the same time wounded and whole, one portion of myself can not understand the other. How true are the words of the German poet: "Life is but toil, fatiguing toil."

What is it that was lacking in my education, father? I grew up under your care, tenderly nurtured, both bodily and mentally; I had no dearth of moral instruction, and in you I had besides a worthy example of self-command. I was so anxious to learn that an experienced observer might have perhaps predicted the reaction. My astonished teachers foretold a brilliant future which has *not* been fulfilled. Perhaps it would have been, if I had not long ago grown sick of all learning.

Is it really a fact that there have been men, nay, whole peoples, who have regarded a long life as the highest possible reward? That they were only satisfied to sink into the grave at a ripe, hoary old age?

Oh, how much wiser are we! To what end prolong toil? In twenty years we have already drunk down the draught, and have nothing



more to expect here. If we live longer, it is because we must; the heart is dead then, and only the stomach and ambition live on. Out upon us for base hypocrites, daring to live such a life!

Again, what did those men of old, who enjoyed life, possess that I lack? My body is as strong as theirs and as enduring, only the zest of life is wanting. I have followed out the ideas of the greatest thinkers of antiquity, I have enlarged and enriched my experience in travels, and for all that, a slave, a creature of his belly, surpasses me in vital zest. What did those Ancients possess which we have lost, or what have we superfluous? Is perhaps our much-vaunted enlightenment only the heat of the forcing-house, so to speak, which hastening the course of Nature, brings plants to a premature bloom and leaves them to fade all the sooner? I almost fear it is so and therefore I hate the lying rubbish of your learning!

Do you remember in the Eastern fable, how the merchant searched in all the known deserts for the fruit that should still his wife's craving? What pains would I not lavish only to obtain that common thing from which Milton excludes only the Fallen Angel?

But am I then really without hope? Does not the road that leads to my goal, disclose itself ever clearer to my view? But I stand at its commencement, irresolute: I am too proud to borrow from beggars, to go and be taught by those who are laughed at!

I had written so far when the door opened and Benjamin entered, dressed in black, and with such a festive air that I laid down the pen in surprise.

"You writing, Samuel!"

"Why should I not write, pray? Because you are going to a wedding perhaps?"

"No, the Bride has come to visit *us*, as we say in the hymn,"<sup>11</sup> answered the young man. "Is it not Sabbath? I wanted to ask you if you were coming to synagogue with me?"

I rose, not without betraying vexation, and putting away my writing materials, replied that I had no inclination to go.

"You are angry with me, Samuel, because I disturbed you," he responded, laying his arm around my neck. "Pardon me: I will not tell any one that you have been writing on Sabbath."

"Foolish boy!" I said, conquered in spite of myself, "do you

think there is any reason to hide it? If I have sinned, it was in ignorance: I had no idea that it was Sabbath to-day."

"How could you forget that!" said he, shaking his head. "Although I often have to laugh at the follies of our ancestors, I must give them right with regard to the Sabbath. Why, I thought every one woke up on Saturday mornings with quite different feelings from ordinary days! But if you are not accustomed to keep Sabbath according to the law, give yourself no concern about me: you know my sentiments."

"Is that an imputation on my sincerity, Benjamin?"

"How easily provoked you are to-day, Samuel!" Then he said mildly, "May I not talk to you as a friend to a friend?"

"May? Nay, you shall, you ought!"

"Well, I only thought you, being a philosopher, might perhaps be above these externalities and did not need to bear a particular day in mind. I wish I were able to be so calm and easy every day in the week."

"In your place, Benjamin, I should be satisfied with one day. There are some who need that."

He looked at me in surprise. "Then you have no objection to going to synagogue with me?"

"If it will give you pleasure, I am ready."

"No, not for my sake, cousin. Your remaining away spoils father's whole pleasure in the Sabbath. Do it for his sake."

"As you will, my dear fellow, though I do not much care about going."

"Appetite comes in eating, Samuel."

"Yes, and goes away with it too. But where in the world are my boots?"

"There they stand under your chair. But what did you mean cousin?"

"I can't tell you, Benjamin." But in my own mind I thought of the wearisome sermons I had to listen to in my youth, Sunday mornings and Sunday afternoons. I thought of the gloomy church, in which the boy used to sit glued to his seat, while outside the bright sun and the green turf enticed him. I even recollected the sound of the church-bell which was my aversion, for it prophesied with hollow monotony, the long and lugubrious sermons which terri-

fied me, and which I could not understand; the sermons in which they made such high demands that I felt I never would be able to satisfy them, and which therefore were words, only words, and nothing but words!

“Why are you staring so hard at your boots, Samuel?” said Benjamin. “You can put them on, they are well polished.”

I entered a synagogue for the first time—for the first time since my childhood. I had forgotten, or thought I had forgotten, all about it. The large, plain room, almost square, with the platform in the centre, in the background the Ark hung with curtains, and containing rolls of the Law. It made a solemn impression upon me on entering. There, behind the long rows of book-stands, were the men with their white praying-mantles around them, from which the thread of the fringes hung down, just as Moses had commanded. They were old, those scarfs: had wandered with Israel over the Jordan, from the Jordan over the Euphrates, thence back into the Holy Land, and from Zion's mountains, the fugitives and captives carried them with them into all parts of the earth. Tacitus, who saw them in Heathen Rome eighteen hundred years ago, calls them then venerable from their antiquity.

Had the threads fulfilled their aim, and preserved their wearers' hearts pure from the temptations of the eye and ear? “And ye shall look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, that ye seek not after your hearts and after your eyes, in pursuit of which ye have been led astray.”<sup>12</sup> I wished I had continued to wear the fringe I bore as a boy, had looked at it more often, and called these words of Moses to mind. What a wonderful knowledge of human nature is contained in this precept! Truly, the man Moses was a great man!

There they stood, the children of my nation. Were these the same men as those feverish, uneasy tradesman and peddlers? Peace and contentment lay now on their calm countenances, not a trace of assumed devoutness, each one seemed at home as in his own house, each one felt his own right! Yes, it is a nation of MEN! How they prayed and sang! The fresh boys' voices joined in right cheerily: I could have joined in myself! Then the precentor raised his voice, and I heard the peculiarly mournful, guttural chant of the Semites, as it soared aloft to God in loud rejoicing! Who gave thee this ser-

vice, thou Wondrous People? What authority ordained thy liturgy, prescribed what prayers thou shouldst say: what priests and prelates ruled over *thee*?

The scattered nation has lost its own national princes; but is not God its king as He promised? They have preserved their spiritual autocracy, from Palestine to this day; while we, immediately after the Apostles, became subservient to the despotic power of the Church.

My reverie was interrupted by the sound of tiny bells. They were taking the Torah-rolls (scrolls of the Law), ornamented with gold and silver crowns, from the Ark, and then they read the portion of the Law set down for that week. I sat in Benjamin's place, he stood in front of me. He was called up to pronounce the benediction over the Torah, and as he came down again, he asked me whether I would like to do the same.

"For goodness sake, no!" I cried, alarmed.

He looked at me in astonishment: "It is no sin, Samuel!"

I signed to him to leave me alone. Had I not come there to destroy this very Law? This same constitution, which was ratified before Nineveh was founded, and while mythic gloom hung over Hellas: this Law which was promulgated a second time in Jerusalem, re-enacted when Romulus and Remus had scarce founded their seat of violence, and which was hoary with age when *ours* was born: that Law is fresh yet and without any temporal power to support it! 'Tis wondrous, truly wondrous!

While occupied with these thoughts, suddenly I heard the voice of the precentor—"It is a tree of life to those who take hold thereon: happy those who grasp it. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace."

Stirred with emotion, I gazed up and saw him holding up the roll to the assembly. No mystic Host, my father, no wonder-working image—nothing but the Law-book of this people, of humanity, as they believe!

Then the concluding service followed, as the Rabbi did not preach that day; he does so only once a fortnight.

"You do not seem to admire our service," said Benjamin, as we went out. "You are so curious: I am sorry I induced you to go with me." I made no answer.



"Do you wish to be silent?"

"Nay, cousin, do you speak!" I answered, taking his arm.

"A philosophical soul like you are, dear Samuel, perhaps can do without all ceremonies: you are right in saying men ought to lead a purely spiritual life——"

"Who asked you if I was right?" I cried, half angrily.

He shook his head, and continued, "But even I, who, like you, hate all dead matters of form——"

"Do you too call this dead then?"

"Even I feel so much better when I come home from Synagogue on Sabbath; I feel I have done my duty. And not only do I feel so. People really are more joyous and more reverent to-day than during the week. Just see at home what a sweet calm has spread itself over the whole household, even the kitchen is empty and tidied up. Good old Taube is resplendent in her handsome Sabbath-cap, as she sits in the backroom and cons her well-worn, almost ragged prayerbook, and little Sister makes her grand toilet of the week to-day, and receives us with all the air of a materfamilias who has regulated the house to a T. And how pleasant father is at table too. How full of interesting little stories and witty proverbs which are truly wonderful for their point. But all this may seem very stupid to you, Samuel; you are accustomed to the world; it must be quite different out in the world. Brilliant social gatherings, with their charming ladies and celebrated men——"

"Is there not service again this afternoon, Benjamin?" I interrupted his raptures.

"Certainly, but what do you want to know for?"

"Then do you go to Synagogue again and render your thanks to God that he has given you the Sabbath instead, for your charming ladies and celebrated gentlemen know nothing of this Sabbath-peace. If your old coat keeps you warm, Benjamin, beware of selling it for the gaudy doublet of those people whose very heart freezes in their body under it!"

"I can not fathom you any more, Samuel. At first you spoke with enthusiasm of our fortune if we could only get rid of the old forms that bind us, and so raise ourselves to a pure spiritual life; and now you half contradict yourself."

"Bear my deeds in mind, and not my words, Benjamin."

"How do you mean?"

"Notice what I am, and not what I declaim: regard my heart, and not my mouth."

"What are you then?"

"I am unhappy, cousin, unhappy," pressing his hand, "through my own wisdom. If you wish to imitate me, there is room for more of you too, in the same doomed boat. Therefore I warn you—but it is Sabbath, a day of mirth and gladness as you said: let me try, too, to be merry."

This time it was Benjamin who made no reply. We walked home in silence.

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## LETTER XV.

JANUARY 30TH, 185-.

How sweet is the intercourse with a pure womanly nature! I can esteem friendship between men, for to such I owe the most important years of my life. But what it is a virtue to repress in masculine intercourse, it is fitting to yield to with women. Who will deny that such companionship gains in grace what it lacks in grandeur, and that we are happier when we give the reins to our softer emotions?

I have so often been reproached with coldness of disposition, and even in daily intercourse with those nearest to me, have always had a matter-of-fact air with me, which seems to put all ideal demands incontinently to flight. But how soon do I strip off that mask where I am allowed to be human! Alas, I sought long in the world for happiness, and in vain; I grew cold and wretched because I found myself alone in the wilderness. This misery took the place of love for truth and for humanity, which then rusted in my heart, and to curious eyes I always presented a countenance of stone.

Ay, they rusted in my heart. What business had I in that great mart of deception and hypocrisy, called the world? In what die should I stamp the metal of my character, for circulation in a commerce which offered no footing for me, which attracted me and at the same time repelled me, astonished and offended me? A commerce which was actuated by a spring I understood not. It was a failing in my disposition that I had no comprehension of the most necessary principle of Nature. How often had I not tried to follow out some certain useful aim with energy, and how often did I relinquish it with disgust? I can not work for myself; and though filled with the desire to work, I have no *aim* to toil for. So I must sit still and allow my energies to rot, and watch my own gradual decay with them.

I have known men who wore a strange look of secret anguish upon their otherwise passionless faces. The atmosphere that surrounded them was like ice, their voice—how shall I describe their voice? It was a *noise* like the howl of the wind or the creaking of a door; the charm, the soul of the human voice was entirely wanting in it. Ghosts, with their bloodless lips and immovable eyes, must speak like them. If it be true that the spirits which have been rashly conjured up can not be so easily laid, it is equally the case that the shade that has been once banished, can not be summoned again. Hence to these living corpses, every wave of emotion is a torture from which they seek to rid themselves by rough demeanor, because they are unable to return love. Through necessity or choice, they have banished their warmer emotions, can not now recall them, and are condemned ever to feel their loss.

How fortunate am I then that love to mankind is so interwoven with my nature that I can never lose it! It has remained with me through all my sorrow, and when I thought I was quite alone and separated from all others, chance showed me how firmly I hung to my brethren. Give me a warm, pure, and feeling heart, and all its emotion, all its noble aspirations will become mine too, and with astonishment I discover that I can yet become enthusiastic! True, it is only a borrowed light in which I shine then: as soon as my sun sets, the old darkness ensues again, and with redoubled bitterness I perceive that I am but an opaque body, lacking all original light!

I am enjoying just such a new spring-time in my life, thanks to my cousin Rachel. It gives me a strange and secret pleasure to see



how fresh, how pure, and strong are all the impressions of this young girl's mind. Have I then grown so old or so wise, that everything appears to me clad in the dull gray of indifference? Feeling's glow, wherewith Nature endows the youthful, is gradually extinguished with ripening age; and it seems that this lost power can only be regained by an alliance with some true and good person. Perhaps the founding of a household is the sole and proper means devised by Nature to bring the pure and unselfish promptings of the youth and maiden into activity, and to awaken what slumbered before into wholesome reality.

It is a wondrous atmosphere that surrounds this solitary girl. I feel a salutary glow as I run down the stairs of an evening, and laying my hand on the well-known handle, behold the cozy room and its amiable mistress.

She is of small stature, and so slight that at the first glance I took her to be a mere girl of fourteen, until the large eyes, changing from black to brown, which illumine her graceful features in charming variety, soon told me otherwise. Her manner is that of a little coquettish tease, yet withal modest, always self-possessed and sensible. Can you see her now as she looks up from her embroidery and gives me a friendly nod of welcome?

It is an old-fashioned, wainscoted room in which we are sitting. Over the sofa on which Rachel is stationed, hangs a picture of Moses breaking the tablets of the Law. Opposite us are a pair of venerable walnut cabinets, wonderfully carved chairs which seemed to have descended from the last century, and over all, a holy calm graces this my home in Germany. The white curtain, which hides the tall window looking out upon a side-alley, seems a sacred screen that shuts out all the disquiet and care of the external world. The mild light of the lamp illuminates the whole room and is reflected in beams from the sparkling eyes of my friend. Let me say friend: I care little if others smile: I think too highly of the sex to disallow them this relationship. And in truth, there is such an intimacy and confidence, and at the same time a sense of perfect safety, between Rachel and myself, that I know no other name for her. She has no secret from me, and I—yes, I have one, I must have one from her. This truth and frankness I have often found with other women too, but peculiar to Rachel is a certain practical soundness



of reason, and a satisfaction and joyfulness in life that make me cheerful only to contemplate. Another peculiar feature in our intercourse is our mutual disregard of conventionality: I feel myself a child again, and enjoy the privilege of intercourse with an innocent womanly nature, with a pure and unselfish heart. With us in England, I could not be so much with a single girl without being held to be in love with her, or without people's trying to make me so. Men and women are thus placed, not as mere human beings, at each other's side, but as opposing factions, who severally strive with strategy and deceit to ensnare and conquer the enemy.

"I have been listening some time for your footsteps, Samuel."

"Can you distinguish mine then from others'?"

"I think I could; but I know there is nobody else who comes down-stairs of an evening, as Benjamin is not usually at home."

"*Benjamin not at home!*" Those words went to my heart. Occupied with my own affairs, I had entirely forgotten the boy. I could guess where he passed his evenings.

"Are you dissatisfied with him, Rachel?"

"Perhaps; but not on that account."

"Oh, he disturbs your quietude, breaks in on your taciturnity, I suppose."

"Don't tease, cousin. No, I am very glad that a little life has come into the old house again."

"Again, Rachel?"

"Yes, it had become so quiet here, so very quiet. Father sat the whole day, and goodness knows how late into the night, studying, seldom speaking, and then only what was absolutely necessary. I need not describe the change in him to you or Benjamin. He smiles now sometimes, takes notice of what I give him to eat, and yesterday actually noticed that I had altered the fashion of my hair, although, it is true, that happened about a year ago!"

"What an injustice to let your beautiful hair go unnoticed!"

"Oh," she cried, with that dear, saucy laugh of hers, "Samuel has actually paid me a compliment! Now the Messiah is coming surely!"

"I but spoke the truth, cousin!"

"Must the truth always be told?"

"It seems not."

"See then what you do. Although you know full well that I have nothing to do with my hair's growing or falling out, yet you praise it and try to make me vain. You therefore will have to bear all the blame of that fault; are you ready to do so, sir?"

"I am, your worship. But take care, most righteous judge, that you do not lay upon my shoulders the burden of your old stock of vanity too!"

"Slanderous cousin! Who tells you that I was ever vain? Do *you* possess the failing perhaps?"

"A little, I fear."

"Well, now that you are so ingenuous as to confess, I will own to you too, that I fear I am just a little vain also. And now we are friends again."

"Is that enough, Rachel?"

"What do you demand now, Mr. Malcontent?"

"I want some one to love me!"

"Well, and have you not?"

"What?" I cried, astonished.

"I know somebody who loves you more than you deserve."

"Tell me quickly, Rachel, you do not mean yourself?"

Again she broke into hearty laughter: "Gracious, what a modest cousin is this one of ours! Reassure yourself, most venerable Samuel; you are much too awful a personage to me. I should have to toil my whole life long to raise a merry smile on that austere countenance."

"Would it not be worth the trouble of the attempt, little Coz?"

"No use, Samuel: you must give up the hope that I shall try."

"Oh, I do not wish you to try a bit, I am sure!" I replied, sulking.

"Why, he is really insulted!" she exclaimed gleefully. "Be calm again, dear cousin, and let me pour oil on your wound. For such a superior individual as you, a wife of some rank is requisite. But do you not know who I mean loves you beyond your deserts? It is father! Are you satisfied now?"

"I am, my dear cousin, for I too love your father with all my heart."

"Yes, he has a secret love for you, Samuel. In his eyes, you are still the forsaken orphan, and he believes it is his duty to make up for all the loneliness of your early years."

"I was not quite *forsaken*," I murmured, and to myself I said, "And this was the man I came to convert!"

"A child that does not grow up among its family, Samuel, has only half a childhood. What did the old Pole say yesterday? 'Bind me if you will, but cast me then among my dear ones!' And he was right. Better be bound and among one's family, than free among strangers. I remember how grieved I was when Benjamin went away from us, though only for a couple of years."

"But why did not your father educate him himself?"

She was silent for a time. At last she said in a low voice, "Father has forbidden us to talk of our elder brother."

"But what has *he* to do with Benjamin's education?"

"My father educated him most carefully, it was his delight to study with him, and he was proud of the handsome, bright boy. But when he suddenly took the fearful step that cast my mother into her grave, father spoke not a word for weeks and months. He grew melancholy and took the misfortune too much to heart. Nor would he teach Benjamin any more; he mistrusted himself, and laid the blame on his own mode of instruction. And so he sent Benjamin to Seebach for three years."

"And did he come home improved?"

"Well, I do not know, Samuel. He was always a good-natured fellow, and that he has remained. But he is at times a little lax, and I wanted to ask you, cousin, to keep an eye on him."

"O you strict old auntie you!" I exclaimed. "Do you want a boy eighteen years old to be a sanctimonious hypocrite?"

"No, no, Samuel: am I then so unreasonable? I do not find fault with his flow of spirits, but I fear he likes the theatre too much, and looks after pretty girls more than is proper."

"Well, and what if he had fallen in love with a pretty face?"

"That would not do for the son of his father."

"What a rigid little Puritan you are, Rachel! Suppose that misfortune were to happen to you?"

"It will not happen to me," she replied quietly.

"Who will guarantee you?"

"Can you give away what already belongs to another?"

"I do not understand you, Rachel."

"I think, Samuel, every girl has two lords, the present, her

parents, and the future one, her husband. When then she enters upon a love-affair without her parents' knowledge, she deceives both her present and future rulers."

"Then you will fall in love at your father's command?"

"How cruel you can be, Samuel! Why do you not say: You too then wish to act as a Jewish maiden?"

"Speak more clearly, Rachel."

"Is it not the custom among our nation, that the father has the right of disposal over his daughter's hand, and that we girls should keep our hearts free from inclination in order that we may not fall a prey to shame, and bring disgrace on the heads of those who gave us life?"

"You have grand ideas, Rachel."

"Now it is my turn not to comprehend, Samuel!"

I felt that to such a nature as hers, I should only make myself ridiculous by praise, so I said: "I mean, Rachel, that it is a grand thing to feel you are acting up to principles."

"Would it be principle if we did not know that? But I think perhaps our young men aid us: they scarcely ever seek to gain the affections of a girl without the idea of marrying her."

"Do you know that outside, in the world, we are laughed at for those opinions and ideas?"

She looked at me incredulously.

"Yes, girls in society," I continued, "hold it disgraceful to submit their affections to a man whom they have not loved beforehand, and assert their right to select their husband."

The girl let her work sink on her lap as she folded her hands and looked down in reflection.

"That is very foolish, I think," she said after a time, looking me full in the face. "Ought we not to trust our parents' love more than ourselves? The question is simple! Will not a father and a mother, who have led a wedded life themselves, and had so much experience with each other, know better which young man will make the best husband for her, than the young girl who knows nothing of matrimony?"

"I will grant that," I said smiling.

"And do you think," she continued, with an earnest countenance, "do you think it is better to follow our own passion than the holy



command and the reasonable request of our parents? Must we not relinquish," and her voice sank with a shade of painful suffering in it, "must we not relinquish much that seems allowed and permitted by Heaven? And if it is a sin to murmur against God's design which I know not, is it not a sin to rebel against my parents', which I do know? And even if I do bring some sacrifice, do I not know that I shall be the better off for it? My parents are in the place of God, and I dare refuse their request as little as His: they both know what is best for me!"

"But when hard-hearted parents try to force their daughter into a marriage with a man she detests?"

"Jewish parents are not hard-hearted, Samuel, Jewish parents do not force their children!"

"But let us suppose the case, you yourself loved without——"

"That will do, cousin," she interrupted with a slight blush. "Tell me, have you finished the story of the 'Jewess of Tangiers'?"

"Yes, last night, before going to bed."

"Tell it me then."

"Why do you not read it yourself? I can not tell it as fully or as nicely as it is written."

"Why, you know I can not read English!"

"Well, I will translate it for you into German."

"Oh, why not tell it to me? Do you not prefer hearing me narrate to read?"

"Yes, *you*."

"See now, another compliment already!" and we both burst out laughing. "Only get into the habit, dear Coz."

"Have I not bad habits enough, Rachel?"

"More than enough!"

"Well, will you name some to me?"

"Oh, willingly. Indeed, cousin, I have so much I wanted to talk to you about," she continued, half in joke, half in earnest; "I should like to have it out now: may I?"

"Come along, my ears are wide open."

"First, Samuel, you are too much of a book-worm. You do not wish to become either a Rabbi or a Physician: why then do you study so much?"

"Next count!" was all I replied.

"I should not mind the studying, for it is praiseworthy of course ; but it makes you so pale, Samuel. Do you know, sir, sometimes I actually imagine that you are not really studying up there by yourself? Father at least is always cheerful after he has done his work, but when you come down, it is quite a long time before you thaw and deign to take notice of other human beings around you, and among others, of your most unworthy little cousin, as you presume to call her."

"I own my fault, most righteous judge, and promise amendment."

"But I have not yet done, Samuel. Why do you not do something, follow some profession?"

"I am no man of business, Rachel."

"Does every one then do *business*? But I think, every man who wants to be a man in the world, ought to have some business to do, something to perform. Why do we women honor men, Samuel? Because they are the lords who move things, create and rule the circumstances we see around us. We are but women, and have the right to submit to them."

"I have thought as you think too, but I have never found a profession I could like."

"I think you can not, simply because you are not forced to!"

"Rachel!" I said reproachfully.

"Yes; you find fault with the whole world, and yet do not take your place in it. If I have not properly supervised the house, Samuel, the food does not seem right to me, I can scarcely endure anything in the place. You too would feel greater pleasure in men if you mingled more with them. Men are naturally good, Samuel, and so are you: you could be useful to them, and they would love you. But as you are, you are withering in your solitude and not a soul has any benefit from you. You are not angry with me I hope?"

I could not help taking her little hand, and imprinting a kiss upon it.

"That is not proper, Samuel!" she said, swiftly withdrawing it. "I did not put out my hand for you to kiss."

"How should I know that, Rachel?" I replied, as I rose to my feet to walk up and down a little. In this manner, I pacified my arms which, somehow or another, experienced a curious sensation, as of a desire to extend and flex themselves again; I actually think they had the bold desire to embrace the dear little preacher!

"You tease!" she replied. "Now for a punishment, you shall sit down and tell me that story."

"Most willingly!" I replied, sitting down at her side. And I began:

### "THE JEWESS OF TANGIERS."

At Tangiers, a seaport of Morocco, lived a Jewish family in poor circumstances, but always earning enough to gain a respectable living. Hayim Hachuel worked hard from morning till night, hawking about his wares through the streets, assisted by his grown-up son Issachar. Fortune seemed as if it would not smile on their labors, and his trade would hardly have yielded a sufficient income for the support of his family, if his wife Simcha had not been such an excellent coadjutor. Not only did she attend to all the affairs of the household, assisted by her daughter, but the two women employed every spare moment in making little fancy articles and artistically woven wire-belts, which were greatly in favor with the ladies of Morocco. The girl, in the year 1831, when the following events happened, was seventeen years of age, and of such marvelous beauty that the Moors were said to envy the Jews the possession of such a jewel. Her parents had given her the name of Esther, after her father's mother, who had enjoyed a similar fame, as was yet remembered by many of the oldest inhabitants of Tangiers.

The steady work was not always to the taste of the little beauty; she would have preferred to spend an hour or two occasionally in a good long gossip with a companion. Often when sitting in the courtyard busy with her work, while her mother attended to household affairs, she would let her hands sink upon her lap, and look up thoughtfully into the azure sky, so beautifully vaulted over her head. She thought of the wondrous garden which she had once visited, with its roses and golden jessamine bushes, its purple grapes that trailed so beautifully along the lattice work; of the lovely valley beneath the city-gate, through which the crystal waters of the Bu-Sefa coursed. There she would stroll on holidays, with her parents, amidst citron and orange groves; and pluck a rose on the bank of the streamlet, as young girls love to do. But Simcha, her mother, was harsh. She never indulged in idle talk, she knew not what pastime

was. Esther was not allowed to leave the house alone, not even on the Sabbath: her mother had forgotten what a girl of seventeen delighted in. Under such circumstances Esther was glad to have an acquaintance whom otherwise she would have rejected, in accordance with the prevailing prejudices of her people. There lived in her neighborhood a Moorish woman, who carefully gathered the gossip and news of the town, of which, without her, Esther never would have heard a word. Besides, it was a sweet pleasure to the poor girl, if, at sunset, she could slip out of the house for a few minutes and listen to the chattering Tahara, who never failed to condole and sympathize with her. When Esther had given an account of her long day's toil, the compassionate Tahara would clasp her hands in token of commiseration, so that the child became deeply imbued with the idea of her mournful fate.

No wonder that the child was almost frantic when, one day, her mother, either in a fit of bad humor or with her usual severity, harshly scolded the young girl on account of some transgression which, in her eyes alone, was a grave one, and even threatened her with blows. Beside herself with terror and indignation, she fled from the house and instinctively sought shelter with her Moorish friend.

Tahara was frightened when she saw Esther come into her room, and with a loud sob sink down at her side on the sofa, in a fit of lamentation.

"What is the matter, my darling?" she exclaimed, kneeling down beside Esther and locking her in a loving embrace; "who can be so cruel as to pain my tender dove, who can remain unmoved at the sight of such a beauty?"

"Oh, must *you* mock me too!" sobbed the girl.

"Beautiful girl," said the Mooress, "why torment yourself and hide your grief from me?"

"What will words avail," said Esther, rising again, her eyes swimming with tears; "what is the use of lamenting like a child. Let grief consume me so that I may sink into an early grave, before having known what life is."

"By Allah, you commit a deep sin, my friend. How many young men pass by, the best-looking youths of Tangiers, straining their eyes to catch a glimpse of you!"

"I have requested you before this, Tahara," said Esther, tossing



her head, "never to speak to me of such things. No; if only my *mother* would love me—and yet, am I not hers alone? Do I not work for her from early morn till late at night? But she never calls me her love, her pet, as you do, Tahara—and now I am to be treated like a slave!"

"Poor, innocent, suffering creature!" sighed the Mooress, amid the renewed tears of the girl. "I believe I know the means, Esther, of delivering you from all your troubles, nay, of changing your condition into one of happiness."

The girl raised herself up, and looked at her friend with staring, wondering eyes.

"How often have I described to you," continued the Mooress, "the superiority of Islam; how often regretted that a pearl like you should perish among the miserable Jews! I do not mean to speak ill of your parents, but do you not yourself see, from the oppression which you suffer, that Allah has turned his countenance from you, and vouchsafed happiness and bliss to those who believe in him? And even you, suffering from the tyranny of a *mother*! And what will be the end? If you are lucky, well, you will marry some hawking Jew-peddler, you will have to labor and work like a negro, to attend to your household. No, Esther, you were not born to such degradation. You must become the consort of the first man in Tangiers; ten slaves must fly at your bidding, while you rest upon a magnificent divan, and all you will have to do, will be to recline on your couch and run your nimble fingers over the eight-stringed lyre."

The Jewess made no reply.

"Well, my sunbeam," continued the woman, "that pleases you, does it not? Well, just let me have the management of it and you will see miracles."

"What nonsense are you talking, Tahara? Believe me, I can never become a good Mohammedan. But I must go." And she put on her slippers that had fallen from her feet. "What will mother say?"

"Let me go, Esther, and you stay here. Sleep a little, my child, and become calm. If I take charge of the matter, all will be well."

"Indeed, Tahara?" and she pressed the hand of the Mooress to her bosom.

"But you have never yet spoken to my mother?"

"Oh, for your mother too I have a little cure," she replied mysteriously. "Be of good cheer; only wait here till I come back."

"I will. God be with you, Tahara." When the woman had gone, Esther arranged the cushions, and with the feeling of a school child unexpectedly released from studying her lessons, she lay down on the ottoman, her hands locked above her head, the tresses of which were interbraided with silver cords. Thus reposing she contemplated the frescoing on the ceiling. Even the sweets of secret pleasure were not wanting, and when this was about to change into a feeling of remorse, she would thus argue with herself: "Of course, it is not right to leave my work so suddenly, and lie down upon a bed of laziness in the middle of the day; but it is better that I should not be present while Tahara speaks with mother; I would not know where to hide my head for shame. What will Tahara say," she continued to spin out her thoughts, turning to a more pleasant subject, "if mother takes her into our best room; she will certainly not receive her in the kitchen? I wonder whether she will see my velvet cushion with the embroidered leather, and the new carpet? The poor woman has no father or husband to provide for her. Oh, what shall I give her for her friendly service?" And she ran over the list of all her little trinkets, the treasures of a seventeen-year-old heart. "Perhaps the red silken belt which Issachar brought me from Tetuan, which she admires so much? She deserves it, if she succeeds in reconciling mother. Oh, she *must* succeed!" she thought with that confidence which the young generally place in older and more experienced people; "according to what she lately told me of the Governor's wife, she can do more than most people. What fun, if she proposes to her to have me married? Rumor says that she makes a business of these things; but to whom?" The thread of her thoughts, plain and simple thus far, now became entangled in a labyrinth, which the pretty dreamer would not, or perhaps could not follow; she closed her eyes, and rocked by misty images of black slaves kneeling around her, and distant tones of Moorish music, she fell into a deep slumber.

It may have been an hour afterwards, that a knock was heard at the door; first soft, then louder. At last, the door opened, and an old woman, with a dark kerchief tied around her head, peeped in. It was Simcha, Esther's mother. She looked around cautiously, and

gradually stepped into the room. When she recognized the sleeping figure in the partially darkened chamber, she took a deep breath, like one freed from a great burden. Bending over the figure, her face lighted up with maternal pride as she contemplated her lovely child. Simcha was one of those profound but discordant characters, who prefer accomplishing a very difficult duty to giving vent to the slightest demonstrativeness. Now, when she believed herself unobserved, she ventured to impress a timid kiss upon the lips of her new-found pet. Esther awoke, and seeing her mother bent over her, her face expressing intense love, her involuntary anxiety resolved itself into the purest joy as she clasped her mother in her arms and kissed her passionately.

"Foolish girl!" said Simcha, rising in some confusion and seating herself on the divan by the side of her child. "You are so demonstrative, fly into extremes so quickly—you are never collected. Here you run away from your mother, and I, all anxiety, must come and look for you, to find you at last with the good-for-nothing Mooress!"

"Forgive me, mother!" replied Esther, reverentially kissing her hand; "I am glad to know you are reconciled again; don't be angry with Tahara; she means well towards me."

"I do not like your friendship with this strange woman, Esther; no blessing ever came to our race from Ishmael. But let us go home, child!"—and she gently took hold of her hand; she had grieved more for the truant girl than she was willing to show.

The two women were about leaving the house, when Tahara returned. She greeted Simcha with a nod, and said to the girl:—

"Your wish is fulfilled, my child; the governor desires to see you."

The two Jewish women stood there as if a thunderbolt had descended from heaven. Simcha, unable to utter a sound, cast a look of distress and suspicion, first at her daughter, and then at the Mooress. Esther, still clasping the hand of her mother, was the first to regain her composure.

She replied:

"I know not what you mean, Tahara. What business have I with the governor? See here, this is my mother, I belong to her!"



"I see, Esther, it is she of whom you stand in so much fear! But do not be afraid; you are now under higher protection."

"Esther!" shrieked the old mother, with trembling voice.

The girl threw her arms round her. "Dear mother!" she exclaimed with a firm voice, "God is my witness that I do not understand what this woman means. But I see now how right you were in cautioning me against the strange woman. Come, let us go away from her!" As she opened the door to leave, she was confronted by a soldier, one of the guards employed in the police service of the city of Morocco. The women, trembling with fear, stepped back.

"Which of them am I to bring before the Kaid?" he asked Tahara.

She pointed to Esther.

"Never!" shrieked the old woman, putting herself between them. "Dare to touch my child!" she cried, her eyes flashing dangerously.

The trembling girl clung to her mother, and the soldier said indignantly:—

"What a noise you women make, as if the girl was to be roasted alive! The Kaid has given the order, and I must take her. If you prefer that I should use force, I am satisfied," and he laid his hand on the girl's arm.

"Stop!" exclaimed Esther, raising herself up, "I will go voluntarily. And you, mother dear, have no fear! What can happen to me? Am I not innocent? I will soon be with you again!"

The mother shook her head mournfully; she repressed her tears with a strong effort, and motioned her child to go. She then followed her daughter and the accompanying soldier at a distance, and for hours watched the gate of the palace through which her daughter had disappeared.

Though possessed of her mother's firmness, Esther could not suppress a slight tremor when she passed the portal, and the soldier conducted her past a number of sentinels into a circular yard, where he bade her wait. She stood by the fountain, staring at the dripping water and the brick walls, painted in gay colors, and inscribed with sentences from the Koran. The soldier soon returned, and beckoned her to follow him. He led her through a large saloon, magnificently tapestried, the like of which Esther had never before beheld, into a



small department, where a venerable old man was seated on a sofa, in busy conversation with a black-coated European. It was Arbi Esido, the Kaid or Governor of Tangiers. When the foreigner had taken his leave, the old man turned to the girl, and said with a kind air:—

“You, my good child, are then the Jewess who, moved by the truth of our holy religion, has concluded to become one of the faithful?”

Esther remained silent.

“Be not afraid my child. Think you are standing before your father. Take off your vail.”

She did so. He rose from his seat struck with her dazzling beauty.

“Lovely child, report has not spoken in too high terms of you. How willingly do I comply with your wish! You shall become one of us, you shall be happy! Let that be my care. But why are you speechless? You are safe here, you have nobody to fear.”

“What answer shall I give to my lord?” she murmured softly, her head bent low. “Is it meet that I should contradict my lord?”

“What did you say, unbelieving woman?” he exclaimed with threatening brow.

“May my lord forgive his humble servant! My lord has been misinformed. Never will I renounce the faith of my fathers! Never will I abjure!”

He shook his head, and after having sent off a soldier with a message, paced the room uneasily.

It was not long before Tahara made her appearance. “Is this the Jewess of whom you spoke to me?”

“It is, my lord.”

“Repeat then, her words.”

“She acknowledges the Prophet in order to escape the slavery of Judaism.”

“O Tahara!” exclaimed Esther, with painful emotion, “what injury have I ever done to you that you should seek my destruction? Truly, truly, my lord, I never uttered those words!”

“What *were* your words?” inquired the Governor.

“I said I never would become a good Mohammedan!”

“Why do you deny it, Esther?” whispered Tahara in her ear, trying to persuade her. “Admit what I have said as true, and your fortune is made!”

"Silence!" exclaimed the Governor. Then turning to Esther, he said:—

"My child! your testimony, being that of a Jewess, has no validity against that of a Mooress. You are one of us." Esther here stepped back: her face became deathly pale, and the Governor continued:

"Be not afraid; what does it all amount to? Only to acknowledge in two words Allah and his Prophet. My child, you imagined, no doubt, something awful would be demanded of you. Be of good cheer; we exact no sacrifice of you, and you shall have no cause to repent your action. You shall be, of all my daughters, one dearly beloved!"

She was about to reply, but he put his finger significantly to his mouth, and motioned a slave that had been summoned.

"Bring this girl to your mistress! I recommend her to her care; I will soon be with her myself."

She followed the slave without a glance at her former friend.

"Tahara," said the Governor, when alone with the woman, "did she really pronounce the words of confession? Woman! speak the truth; no harm shall befall you. Perhaps you have been overhasty. Consider well; do not lead me to commit a crime from blind love of our holy faith!"

"No, my lord!" she answered, casting a suspicious glance at the two soldiers stationed near her, and their long staves. "It is as I have reported to you."

For three days Esther remained in the house of the Governor—days of anxiety and anguish for her parents and relatives, who in vain endeavored to obtain some information of her fate. She herself, waited upon by slaves, treated by the daughters of the house like a sister, deported herself with strange insensibility. She did not reject the magnificent dresses, the golden bracelets and anklets, the dazzling ear-drops they presented to her; but she could not be induced to decorate herself with these fine things: she resolutely clung to her former plain attire. She often stood, in company with the other ladies, at the windows, which were carefully guarded by movable wooden bars, and from which the ladies could enjoy a view of the magnificent landscape without being seen themselves. Many a young Arab and Moor dashed past on his swift

steed, the flowing mantle shining in the bright sunlight, and the long glittering rifle hanging at the saddle bow. When questioned whether she had no desire to become the wife of some such glorious cavalier, she would answer with a calm "No!"

"These men, decked like women, are not to my taste," she said; "nor those that boast of their strength and their arms. I compare these mentally with my father, a man of peace, who would not harm an insect. Through him peace and contentment dwell in our home. A husband like him will be selected for me by my father."

The girls looked at each other and laughed, in which Esther joined them. She was usually in the company of the youngest daughter of the Governor, a charming girl of thirteen, for whom she felt a deep attachment.

"My poor Fatme!" she exclaimed, smoothing the girl's luxurious ringlets.

"It seems you pity us?" exclaimed the others.

"So I do," replied Esther with a roguish smile. "Are you not to be pitied, as you will never obtain a husband?"

The girls looked at her, half puzzled, half laughing.

"A Moorish girl," she continued, "does not obtain a husband, but the husband obtains her. You are locked up until you are married, and locked up worse after that. You hear what is passing in the world only through the mouths of your stupid slaves. We Jewish women are free. Our fathers and husbands have confidence in us."

"But of what benefit to you is the freedom of misery?" exclaimed the girls.

Her usual answer was a sigh. On one occasion she took a costly bird-cage from the wall, opened the door, and let the bird out.

"What are you about?" they all cried. "Be quick, close the blinds, that the bird does not escape!"

"What are you afraid of?" she said quickly. "Has not the bird a golden cage and plenty of food? *It will not be foolish enough to prefer the liberty of misery.*"

On the fourth day the Governor sent for her.

"Have you been treated well, my child?" he inquired affectionately, "or have you any complaint to make?"

"Better than your servant deserved," she replied, bowing respectfully. "All were kind and attentive to me."

"Have you any wish to express?"

"None but that I may be permitted to return to my father's house!"

"Do not speak so foolishly!" exclaimed the Governor. "For this once," and he stroked his beard, evidently in an effort to control his anger, "I will only remember that it is my daughter who speaks. But henceforth, remember that you belong to us. The Jews have no longer any claim upon you. I will send my secretary to you, to instruct you in the doctrines of Islam."

"Your handmaid does not understand the words of the learned man!"

"Well spoken," he replied, with a smile upon his lips. "A woman has no judgment in such matters. Confide in me, and be grateful to Allah for the mercy he has shown you. See, my child! I know well that the Jews are the children of the great Abraham, the same as we are, but Allah has rejected them and trodden upon them, as upon the mud in the streets, because they have denied his great Prophet Mohammed (praised be his name), and made war against him. You, however, shall be received into the community of the faithful; yes, you are already a member of it, because, according to Tahara's testimony, you have already renounced your infidelity."

"Not so, my lord," she replied, erecting her head with dignity and self-reliance. "If it be true that my people have been adjudged by our Father in Heaven to be trodden upon—let my fate be the same. Your servant is not a child, whose eyes see not, whose ears hear not. I know my God, the God of Israel, and I can not leave him! Your false Prophet is an abomination to me and a mockery!"

The Governor was so amazed at her words that he could not speak for some minutes.

"Wretch!" he at last hissed forth in rage. "You have blasphemed the name of the Prophet, and you shall feel my power. On your knees, you shall in vain implore what my bounty would have granted you in love. Rise!" and he stamped his foot violently on the floor. "Take her to prison. In a dark dungeon, with bread and water for her food, she shall ponder over her words! Does this satisfy you better?"

"I laugh at your threats," replied the courageous girl, at the moment the soldiers led her away. "Your power will have as little effect upon me as your blandishments."



He looked after her, his eyes flaming with passion, which, however, involuntarily turned to admiration.

Weeks passed, and no one in Tangiers could discover what had become of the girl. The entire Jewish community was in a state of fearful anxiety, looking upon this mishap as the forerunner of a fresh outbreak of fanatic persecution. The Moors defended, while the Christian merchants regretted, the action of the Governor. Only the Spanish Consul, Don Jose Rico, thought it worth while to make energetic representations against this arbitrary proceeding, but he was very politely informed that he could not be heard in matters referring to religious scruples. But what did the sympathy of strangers amount to, compared with the grief of Hachuel's family? Had a member of the family been removed by death, the grief would not have been nearly so intense. All business ceased to be thought about. Day after day the old father waited on one foreign consul after the other, imploring their intercession with the government, and when he returned home, he would seat himself upon the floor, mourning, weeping for his child. His wife looked the shadow of her former self, and Issachar was unwearying in his efforts to gain some clue as to her fate. He watched the prison in which she was confined, hoping to catch a glimpse of her face behind one of the barred windows. One day he came home and said to his father:—

“I have succeeded to-day in bribing an attendant. After sunset we will be permitted to get near enough to the window of her cell to speak to Esther.”

“My blessings on you, my child!” said the old man. “How long have we to wait yet?”

“Four hours yet, father.”

He drew a deep sigh, enveloped himself in his *Taleth* (mantle) and sat speechless until evening. When it had grown dark, the family left the house together.

Esther was already standing at the window, awaiting their arrival. She held out her hands to her dear ones who covered them with their tears.

“What are you doing?” she said, deeply affected. “It is not right that my venerable father, and my beloved mother, should kiss the hand of their guilty daughter. My parents, can you forgive me?”

"What can you mean, my life?" said the old man sobbing. "There is no guilt in you. Is it the fault of the lamb if it is attacked by the wolf?"

"No, my father!" said the girl. "God is just! I have merited this punishment. I sought consolation from strangers, and God has cast me among them; I wished to escape chastisement at the hands of my mother, and I have to bend under the rod of the tyrant."

"My daughter!" exclaimed the mother, "may God protect you as you are innocent! Oh, your father is right. I treated you too harshly. People will point at me and say, 'Behold the unnatural mother!'"

"Why do you grieve, dear mother?" said Esther, pressing her hand to her lips. "O mother, do not join my tormentors and burden my heart still more. My dear parents, let us bear the fate allotted to me as a trial sent by the Lord, to whose will I have resigned myself; He will forsake us neither in this world nor in the next. Tell me of things that have happened at home since my absence. How are all our relatives and friends? And you, Issachar, you do not have a word to say to me; have you forgotten your pet?"

The young man stood there, weighed down with grief. He pressed his burning forehead against the cold wall; he grasped her hands, but was unable to utter a word.

"Dear brother!" she said, and a hot tear dropped upon his hand. "I know you would like to batter down these walls in your rage. But compose yourself, Issachar, and be a man. It is a consolation to me to know that you are with our parents."

He looked calmly at the pale, lovely face above him.

"You, at once our sorrow and our support," he said with fervor, "speak, my darling, time presses; what can be done for you?"

"Nothing, my brother. Have patience, take courage, and let me beg you, do not rouse the anger of the Kaid against our family. What can he do to me, if I remain resolute?" There was a long pause.

"What can he do to you?" at length stammered old Hachuel, with painful effort. "What can he do to you?" was repeated in such a heart-breaking tone of anguish, that the others looked at each other in terror.

"And if it be so, dear father," she replied softly, raising her hand and shaking her head, "and if——" and again a pause of silence.

“Esther, my child.” The old man could scarcely be heard

“My father!” she replied.

“My child, I have consulted your uncle, the pious Rabbi Eliezer.”

“And what does he say?”

“He tells me that, in order to save your life, you may outwardly become a member of the false creed, if you have any prospect of returning at some future time to the faith of your fathers.”

She looked with painful anxiety into the wan face of her father, who dared not look at her.

“And shall I ever have such an opportunity?”

“Perhaps, my daughter!”

“Perhaps!” she repeated in a despondent tone.

“Oh, no; it is certain,” he corrected.

“Certain, my father?” she inquired anxiously, as if he could foretell the future with absolute certainty.

“Certain,” he repeated, staring fixedly at the wall.

She made no reply, but threw a thoughtful look at her beloved ones, who were crouching on the ground below, and looking up to her as if expecting relief from her.

“You say, certainly,” she resumed her speech again. “But how do you know, my father?”

“Only be free again!” whispered the old man. “The next ship will carry us forever into the land of the Europeans.”

“Free? If I leave this prison as a Mohammedan, we shall never see each other again. What do you say, my father?”

He wrung his hands in despair.

“What is your answer, my father?”

He remained silent.

“You—you bid me then forsake my God?”

“I give you permission,” he stammered in sobs.

“Not thus, my father. Shall I, or shall I not? I am your child and will obey you.”

“You are a free agent,” uttered the father at last, after several efforts to find an answer. “The responsibility rests upon you. May God enlighten you, and reveal to you His will. Whatever be your resolve, your parents will sanction it.”

“I understand you, my father,” she replied, and the tears rushed down her cheeks, while she laid her hands in those of her father.

At this moment, the keeper, who exposed herself to severe punishment in case of detection, made her appearance, and separated the unfortunate family.

A second interview was agreed upon for the following evening.

The family returned home much more composed. The misfortune had now assumed a definite shape, and there was the hope of seeing the beloved child soon again.

When, on the following evening, they made their appearance at the designated time, anxiously looking about whether anybody observed them, they were met by the keeper with an appearance of vexation.

"Away with you, wretches! Shall the *Taleb* (secretary) of the Governor see you? He is in there now, and is speaking to her."

"Go home," said Issachar to his parents. "Let me endeavor to hear something more!"

When they had gone, Issachar turned to the keeper; he put a gold piece into her hand and said: "Good Kitub, are you not a mother? Take pity on ours then; let me go in and listen to the conversation."

"You are a very taking young man for an infidel," she replied; "but it is dangerous."

"The consequences be on my head," he said. "Lead on!"

She conducted him into the house, through low passages, until they arrived before the door of Esther's cell. She pointed out to him a hole in the wall, and whispered:—

"The adjoining cell is open. Be on your guard. If he should find you out, your life would be forfeited."

"Either mine or his!" he murmured, opening the door; "woe to *him* if he sees me!"

Having made sure that the cell was empty, he left it again and put his eye to the hole which Kitub had showed him. The little chamber was lighted but sparsely, so that he could with difficulty distinguish the features of his sister, who stood with folded arms before the stern-looking scribe. How sunken were those cheeks, formerly so blooming; how pale those eyes that were so bright!

His whole soul was in his eyes; he saw the lips of the old man move, but he could not hear his words. At last the conversation became more audible, and he could distinguish the following controversy.



"I am sorry for you, my child; you had better reflect; you have time yet to do so."

"I need no more time, Sidi Mohammed."

"Is it then a disgrace to yield, daughter of the stubborn race? Even men submit to force without blame, and will *you* challenge fate? It is your destiny to be saved by the law of our Prophet."

"Who can *force* me to yield," she said haughtily, "if I do not choose to? You may intimidate your followers with the word destiny!"

"Poor child," responded the old man sorrowfully, "you will find that the Kaid possesses the power to break your obstinacy, and then it will be too late."

She raised her eyes and looked at him with a melancholy smile.

"I am an inexperienced girl," she said, "and my lord is advanced in age and full of wisdom; but I have seen a younger sister of mine die of malignant fever, and I know there is an end to life. What can you do to me, since it is the merciful God who hath given us death?"

"Esther, Esther," he exclaimed, "how foolish you are! We love you and desire to save you, but you will not have it!"

"I will not have it!" she sighed, but suppressed a tear.

"No, you will not have it. See, I come here with strict orders from the Kaid to have you bound in chains and immured in the dungeon for criminals, if you are still obstinate; why all this misery? What do you know of religion? And is not Allah the God of us all? But you are blinded by vanity: numerous are the species of folly. You are vain that such value is placed upon you; full of the hatred and stubbornness of your nation, you repel the hand of friendship that I extend to you. You think the base Jews will exalt you, will adore you, if we dismiss you; but your hope will be frustrated."

"Look about you," she replied: "look at the bare, damp walls, the putrid straw bed on the floor; here have I spent these last fifteen days and nights. I had clean cushions and pillows at my parents' house, and my beloved friends surrounding me——"

Her voice faltered for a moment, but she quickly composed herself and continued:

"I do not know what people say about me, and if I could again

see my mother, I willingly would remain a slave for life : but, Effendi," she whispered, approaching him more closely, "He will not let me ! "

"He ? " he asked in astonishment ; "who ?

"He !" she exclaimed, raising her hand, while the fire of enthusiasm beamed from her flashing eyes. "The GOD OF ISRAEL ! Who am I, that *He* should condescend towards me ? But at night, when all men lie down to sleep, I can not rest. Then I hear the sweet voice of the Merciful ; it consoles me and gives me strength ; my only God enjoins me. O Effendi, shall I disobey my Creator ? "

He stepped away from her appalled.

"Allah protect us," he mumbled, "against the *Gins* (the evil spirits) and the beings who have converse with them ! "

"O Taleb !" she cried. "What have I done ? "

"Nothing !" he replied, almost moved to tears, "you wondrous girl ! But Allah's will be done ; may He make light your chains, daughter of the unbelievers ! I must do as the Kaid commands. "

She bowed humbly, and he left the cell. At the door he tarried awhile, in deep revery ; then he shook his head with a sigh and closed the door. In the excitement he took no notice of the shadow that disappeared into the adjoining cell. Issachar lay there on the floor, moistening the earth with his tears. Then he rose and listened. Steps were heard coming along the corridor, arms clinked, and chains were being dragged along the floor. When he heard the soldiers enter Esther's cell, and saw how with many a coarse jest they chained her, he lost all control of himself. In a furious passion, he was on the point of rushing forth from his hiding-place and attacking the brutes, when the picture of his venerable parents rose before his mind, imploring him to reflect.

He groaned in anguish. But what was to be done ? What ? He pressed his head with both his hands, as if this mechanical action would bring forth an idea. But all remained dark.

He stood there yet, deep in thought, when the keeper made her appearance.

"It seems to me you like it here ? " she said with a laugh. "A pity you are not a woman. But come now ; it is time. "

He followed her passively.

"Good woman," he said to the Mooress, when she unlocked the

gate and warned him to look out for the guard, "if you hope for future mercy, have pity on my poor sister!"

"What can I do?" replied the old woman shrugging her shoulders. "My orders are very strict. If it were known that every night I give her my own pillow and cover, I would lose my place. See here," she continued, pointing to a bundle of linen, "I will wrap this around the poor thing's fetters, that they do not hurt her too severely."

He gratefully pressed her hand.

"But," said she, "what was the matter with the Taleb? The tears were in the eyes of the pious man when I opened the door for him. What could have happened? You ought to know, you listened all the time."

A bright thought flashed through his head. The Taleb—*he could save her!*"

Deep stillness hovered over the city. In all the houses the lights were out; only old Hachuel sat up yet with his wife, who from time to time rose from her seat in restless anxiety: every few moments she would go to the door to listen for her son's return. At last she heard hasty steps approach.

"It is he," said Simcha, resuming her seat. Issachar entered and greeted his parents. A pleasant smile lighted up his face.

"You have good news, my son!" exclaimed his mother. The old man looked up in surprise.

"So I have," replied Issachar; "I have just come from Sidi Mohammed, the scribe of the Kaid. I have won him in our favor, he will use his influence for us. You know he is the right hand of the Governor."

"What can he do," exclaimed the old man, "as the Kaid does not even listen to the representations of Don Jose Rico?"

"He too is afraid of his master's firmness. He has therefore proposed to appeal to the Sultan at Fez. He vouches to obtain the consent of the Kaid to this step to-morrow. One of two things is likely to result from it. Either the Sultan will order Esther's discharge, because he protects our people in Fez, and does not permit any conversion by force; or he refers the whole affair to an ecclesiastical court. And in that case also, is Taleb confident of success. He has sworn by his beard that no Mollah in Tangiers shall dare to pronounce judgment against his wish."

"And what will it cost?" inquired the old man.

"Fifty *mitzakels*." (A Morocco gold coin.)

"Are you out of your mind?" he exclaimed. "We do not possess a tenth part of that sum!"

"He does not want that sum for himself, but without money he is powerless. I have promised it, and we must obtain it," he added with a firm determination.

"Must!" sighed the old man.

Simcha had risen from her seat, and fetched from a drawer concealed in the wall, several silver goblets and cups, and also two golden chains and a pair of earrings, all of which she laid before her son.

"I always intended them for Esther!" she said.

"Let it lie there, mother," said Issachar, pushing the little treasure aside; "that shall be the last. We have friends yet, and wealthy relatives too. Let us see whether fifty *mitzakels* are money when a Jewish life is at stake. But now let us retire. To-morrow with the break of day we must go to work."

And thus they separated, Issachar full of joyous hopes, and the mother with the fullest faith in her son. Only the old man could not shake off his misgivings. But he did not dare to give expression to them, as he did not want to disturb his family's short relief.

It is said that Esther remained a week in the dark dungeon, bound in heavy chains, until the influence of the Spanish consul succeeded in inducing the Governor to relent. He declared himself willing to drop the matter. Tahara had disappeared; nobody knew what had become of her: the Jews maintained that the false witness had, in an attack of remorse, taken her own life.

"She will be set at liberty to-day yet," said Don Jose to the old man Hachuel, who came to inquire after the result of his endeavors in behalf of his child. "Go and demand your child in my name."

Hachuel was beside himself. He threw himself on the floor beside the noble Spaniard, and wanted to kiss his feet.

"For shame, Hachuel!" said the kind-hearted man. "Do not make me regret that I have taken your part. However, first let your child be free again, then it will be time to rejoice."

"My lord is right," replied the old man, rising; "may he pardon a father's excitement."



"Well, well," said the consul, tapping him on the shoulder, "let me know whether the unbeliever has kept his word."

When the old man arrived at the palace, he found the Governor sitting before the door, listening to complaints and rendering decisions in matters of dispute between citizens: he held a document in his hand which he studied with knitted brows. It had probably been just handed to him by an imperial officer, who was standing near by, holding a horse, and seemed to wait for a reply.

"My gracious lord," said the Jew tremblingly, bowing until he almost touched the ground; "the Spanish consul wishes blessing and peace to the mighty Kaid, and sends your unworthy slave with the request——"

The Governor looked up; the old man could not utter another word.

"Must the Nazarene employ such a son of a dog to send me a message? What do you want?"

"My daughter——" stammered the terrified old man.

"It is too late," said the Kaid; "I have received orders from the Sultan, whom God preserve; to-morrow I shall send her to Fez."

Poor old man! He covered his face with his hands and sank speechless to the ground. The Kaid, after having cast a contemptuous look upon him, again resumed the contemplation of the document before him, the contents of which did not seem to put him in a sweeter humor; he bit his lips in anger, and finally put the letter into the folds of his garment, not without first pressing it reverentially to his lips.

He then motioned significantly to the attending servant, who approached Hachuel, and touched him with his foot.

"Rise, son of the defiled, and listen to the words of the master."

The old man rose painfully from the ground.

"You know, Hachuel, that the traveling expenses of your child must be borne by you. You will bring me to-morrow fifty *mitzakels*."

The Jew stared at him, almost out of his mind.

"Mercy, my lord!" he stammered at last. "I swear to you by the remains of my mother (may she rest in peace), that I have no money—I even had to contract debt in order——"

He stopped short, apparently confused.

"We know that well," replied the Kaid contemptuously. "You

assure me that you have no money? Well, I believe you. Listen, however, to what I tell you. If you do not fetch me fifty *mitzakels* within the next two hours, you will receive fifty blows on the soles of your feet. Now be gone!"

"Only one word more!" exclaimed the old man beseechingly, stretching forth his hands.

"Speak."

"If I should succeed against expectation in raising the large sum, will you please permit me to accompany my child on her journey? I pray you by your beard!"

"Death to you," replied the proud Moor, "and death to any Jew who shall dare to come within ten miles of her!"

With this message Hachuel returned to his Christian friend.

After he had reported his interview with the Governor word for word, his strength failed him, and he sank to the ground. Don Jose paced up and down the room in towering indignation at the turn the affair had taken; at last he remained standing before the old man, looked at him for some time, and then touched his shoulder.

"Hachuel, my friend, what do you intend doing now?"

The Jew looked up, almost stupefied.

"Nothing," he moaned. "Where shall I obtain such a sum in two hours? They will come and plunder my house, will throw the little they find into the street, and from all the effects they can not realize twenty *mitzakels*. Then they will seize me and beat me until my soul will separate from this body, and rise to Him who created it. That will be well. Perish everything if I must lose my child!"

"Compose yourself, my friend," replied the Spaniard, deeply affected. "Your case is not as bad as you imagine. The treacherous Moor must have appealed to the Sultan without my knowledge, and by this very manœuvre has helped us. Mulei Abderrahman is, according to all accounts, a kind and liberal man, of whom we may hope the best. The very fact that he desires to see the girl is a good sign. About the fifty *mitzakels* you need not trouble yourself; fortunately I received some money yesterday, and will advance them to you. I know you will eventually return them to me. And now go home and carry this news to your family; then come back here and take the old harpy his money."

We will not dwell on the scenes that were enacted the following morning, when the victim of fanaticism was torn before sunrise from her miserable dungeon, how the minions of the law bound the fainting girl on a mule, nor how the distressed family looked on from a safe hiding-place, sending after her their prayers and tears. Issachar had intended to follow at a distance, but he had to submit to the entreaties of his mother, and a friend undertook to join the party on the road, as if meeting them by accident, so as to afford some consolation to the captive and bring back some news of her fate.

The journey lasted six days, over hill and dale in the glare of the African sun. The nights were spent in the tents of the Bedouins, whose camps they passed. The guard had often to exercise its whole force to shield the Jewess from their fanaticism. The good Gershom, Issachar's friend, who pretended to seek protection against robbers, could render but little assistance. He himself had to put up with more blows than he bargained for; which, however, as he was a Morocco Jew, were not strange to him. He was happy when his efforts in behalf of the captive brought a smile on her face; his patience and endurance even compelled the respect of the rough soldiery. Arrived at the gates of the capital, Gershom separated from his ward. She felt herself utterly forsaken. In the city a fanatical mob followed them, crying out for the death of the Jewess who had reviled Islam. She cast anxious looks over the heads of the rabble at the dignified-looking merchants, who sat quietly in their shops, smoking their hookahs and viewing the spectacle. In the faces of many of them she read signs of sympathy, while others passed their forefingers round their throats ominously.

This hurt her painfully. What were the tortures of the dungeon to so much unmerited hatred? It was well that she was tied to the animal. When the soldiers loosened the bonds, on arrival at the house of the Kaid, she fell to the ground unconscious.

The Kaid of Fez, a truly pious and humane man, felt compassion for the unfortunate girl; he received her into his house instead of sending her to prison, and after she had recovered somewhat, he conducted her to the imperial palace, as the Sultan desired to see her.

They rode through the beautiful vine-festooned streets of the old



city, to the new portion of Fez, where the Sultan had his residence. When they turned into the street occupied by the bazaars of the silk merchants, and where the display of magnificent silk and gold-wrought stuffs almost dazzled the eye, the Kaid said :

"It is true, my daughter, you are wearing black garments, but I know that your heart, woman-like, longs for that beautiful material that hangs yonder."

"This is the dress," she quickly replied, "to which you have sentenced us. Dressed in those showy robes I would be as a thorn in my parents' eyes."

The Kaid remained silent ; as they approached the high gates of the palace, under which were splashing fountains surrounded by soldiers of all regiments, he spoke again :

"You are about to step into the presence of the Ruler of the faithful, the mighty monarch, who sits in the shade of yonder splendid canopy, the Sultan of Fez and Morocco, Sus, Dara, Tafiieh and all the western countries. But do not despond, even though you are a woman ; you may find friends here."

"Your servant," she modestly replied, "is accustomed to direct her prayers to the King of Kings, then why should she tremble before mankind ?"

On arriving at the court-yard, the Kaid gave Esther in charge of the captain of the body guard, and bent his steps homeward.

Reports differ as to what happened to Esther at the palace. Some assure us that the Sultan did not disdain to tempt the girl with the splendor of his court, and his powers of persuasion ; others say that it was the heir apparent, Sidi Mohammed, who, inflamed with love for the beautiful Jewess, swore to make her his wife if she would embrace his faith. This much, however, is certain : after remaining in the palace for about eight days, she was conducted back to the Kaid's house, with the same dress and with the same composure of spirit in which she had left it.

The Kaid went eagerly forth to meet her.

"Has my exalted master (whom Allah preserve!)," began the Kaid, "had more influence than my poor wisdom ? Do you submit to the commands of the descendant of the prophet ?"

"Your servant is weary," replied Esther with drooping head ; "very weary, Effendi."



"You are in your abode, daughter; it seems to me you look paler than before; go, rest yourself; but answer me one question——"

"How long must those who are condemned to die," she said gently, "wait until their execution?"

"Not at all, child. Would it not be horrible to keep a man, who knows death is before him, in protracted agony?"

"Why do they make an exception of me, Effendi? They tell me if I do not abjure my faith, death will await me. Why do they delay?"

"So it did not please you at court?" said the Kaid.

"Oh, it is wonderful there; the splendor might easily captivate a poor girl," responded Esther.

"It is in your power to possess that splendor."

"In yours as much as in mine."

"You speak in riddles, O daughter of the cunning!"

"If you should kill your sovereign, which God forbid, O Kaid, and should succeed to his power, do you believe you would be happy?"

"Surely not. Would I not have to fear the wrath of Allah?"

"The emperor is a mere human being, O Kaid. Shall I sin against Him whom you call Allah? Do you suppose that your gilded palace, your wondrous gardens, and your marble fountains, can gladden my heart, if I were to do that for which I should despise myself? I feel, O Effendi, that happiness does not consist in those things of which I was once wont to dream. Oh, I used to be so happy and knew it not! Sometimes, on the middle days of our beautiful festivals, I would go with my beloved parents to the country-seat of the American Consul, which that kind gentleman permitted us Jews to visit. We children gambolled and frolicked in the pleasant shade of the gigantic cork-trees. I remember once, while in search of flowers, I sauntered to the brook which flowed between the hills. I sat down on its cool bank, upon the root of a tree, and watched the small turtles as they swam in the water, I know not what overcame me, Effendi, but the holy peace of God seemed to rest upon His wonderful world; and this peace, my father"—she continued, as she raised her eyes to him—"I feel again rising in my bosom. And shall I myself invoke the winds of the desert to blast my fair garden? Impossible, Effendi, impossible!"

Although Esther gave but little account of what happened in the

emperor's palace, considerable interest was manifested for her in the highest circles.

The Kaid was ordered to assemble the learned Jews of the city, and threaten the whole community with punishment in case they failed to exercise their authority, and persuade the girl to become a convert. The plan was well concocted. The Jews had not forgotten the terrible persecution which they suffered during the reign of the Sultan Muley Yezid, who permitted his soldiers to plunder the Jewish quarter of Fez a whole day long. The Rabbis assembled in the house of the Kaid; the latter went to his harem, where Esther was busily occupied with needlework.

"My daughter," said he to her, "you would not listen to the reason of the Mohammedans; I notice that your mind is concerned about the future world. Behold, the wise men of your nation await you: they will assure you that also with us peace is secured to you in the other world."

"That is not it," she answered, turning ghastly pale; "but I beg you, Effendi, to spare me this pain."

"It is the Sultan's order, Esther; he eagerly desires to save you."

"*He desires——*" she said, curling her lips.

The old man approached her.

"To you, whose deep penetration exceeds that of many already advanced in years, I can confide the secret, that there exists great excitement among the people of the capital. The Mollahs preach vehemently that the Court would strengthen you in unbelief. Everything is to be feared—you understand?"

"I understand, and I do not understand," she answered, shrugging her shoulders; "but that is not to be considered. You know that I do not command here, I must obey."

The Jewish community of Fez had spared no means, intercession, and bribery to liberate their imprisoned sister, but it was all in vain. And now the old men at least had the pleasure of seeing the maiden, to whom they spoke words of cheer. Their fear of a general calamity had so intimidated them that they assailed Esther with entreaties and reasons, to embrace, even if only outwardly, the religion of Islam.

She remained long silent; then she lifted her head and gazed at the assemblage with determined look.

"My fathers," she said, "I understand what animates you. Do

not fear for our race. God will protect the innocent. Do not adduce the example of Queen Esther; she was not compelled to abjure her religion, to renounce her people. O ye pillars of Israel, listen to the words of an ignorant child! I was yet very young, when the renowned hunter Taleb Bucassem would come to our house, for my father dealt occasionally in fire-arms, which he bought of the English. Once this hunter related to me a contest between two lions and a boar, which he had watched. I played beside his knee, but not a word escaped my attention. The unclean boar vanquished the noble lion, but after he had slain the yellow-maned lord, and derided his mate, the lioness prepared for revenge, roaring: 'There is no conqueror besides God!' Shall his name become a mockery among the sons of Islam? Far be this from us! Of what importance is my life? Let me die, that the Holy One may be exalted, that the brow of his adversaries be covered with dust!"

"Amen," said an old *Chacham* (Rabbi); "come here, my daughter, that I may bless you. Woe to him who dares utter a word against this child, for the spirit of the Lord rests upon her; let His will concerning her and us come to pass."

"Amen," said the assemblage.

She prostrated herself before the venerable old man, who laid his hands upon her head and blessed her.

The Kaid, who had listened to all in another room, dismissed the Jews with the assurance that they had nothing to fear, as they had kept their word faithfully. To Esther, however, he spoke:

"Unfortunate, obstinate girl, your hour has come. I go now to fill out your death-warrant, and will order it to be signed to-day. To-morrow you will appear before the Eternal, your judge. May He have mercy upon your soul. Have you any wish to be fulfilled? Shall any of your wise men come to pray with you?"

The maiden became deathly pale; after a while she lifted her benign countenance, in which not a muscle moved, and said:

"I thank you for your kindness. Let me enjoy rest and solitude. My God is near me, I need no aid from any human being. But before your evening prayers, please to send me your two little girls, that they may play in my room."

After Esther, who refused all nourishment, had spent several hours alone, a slave came with the children, and so the Kaid found



her, with both his darlings sitting upon the carpet and sporting with them.

"My daughter," said he, remaining reverentially at the door, "pardon me if I disturb you, but I thought to do you a favor. A Mooress who knows your family wishes to speak to you. Shall she be admitted?"

She nodded, and requested him to take the children with him. Buried in deep revery, she remained sitting on the carpet after the Kaid left the room. Who else could it be but Tahara? But how came she at Fez, what could bring her hither? And indeed, in a few moments the door opened and Tahara entered, pale and looking as if she had grown several years older. She remained standing at the entrance and dared not gaze in the countenance of the Jewess. Esther rose, approached her, and grasped her hand in a loving manner.

"You wish to see me once more, Tahara," said she softly; "that is very kind of you. Oh, I knew that you loved me withal."

The Mooress burst into tears, threw herself down and beat her forehead upon the ground.

"O my daughter," she exclaimed, "what have I done! Could I have anticipated that it would come thus far; I thought to further your happiness, and behold I plunge you into death. Your blood will be upon me, and I will find rest neither upon earth nor in the grave."

"Not so, Tahara," said Esther, raising her; "my blood will not be upon you. I know that you meant it well. You are not to blame for the law which condemns me to death. Compose yourself, a merciful God will harken unto your repentance. Why do you complain? They must have a sacrifice even without you. Speak, Tahara, have you seen my parents lately?"

"They shall not have their sacrifice!" exclaimed Tahara violently; "do I not belong to the race of the desert sons of Augad? But I learned to live in the cities and became cowardly like the Moors. In your danger, I remembered my origin and fled to my brothers and sought a man who would save you. I have found him. To-night, at midnight, the young Sheik of the sons of Augad will come into your room, and carry you away on a swift horse beyond the reach of your enemies."

Esther looked up astonished, and finally said in a dubious tone:

"Whither does not the arm of the Sultan reach?"



"It does not reach to the free children of the desert. Once there, you will despise the rage of the blood-thirsty Moors. You will live in the tent of the Arab and enjoy happy days."

"You are dreaming, Tahara. How can I live without my parents?"

"Why, they await you at Kaaf already: I have provided everything. Away with fatal hesitation, dare to be free!"

"And shall I see them again?" cried Esther, clapping her hands. "I shall live and see my parents? O Tahara, noble, dear Tahara, I will do all you bid. Would that it were night already!"

"Hush!" said the Mooress. "Somebody is coming; be cautious and betray not our plan. Adieu, we meet again."

Esther remained as one stunned: she could not clear her thoughts for the life of her. "*Freedom, Freedom!*" was all she could murmur, as she paced the room, and "*shall I see them again?*" It was well that nobody saw her: her joyful laugh, her flashing eyes would have betrayed her. In this mood she waited for night. Time passed slowly. At last it grew dark, the stars came out and, the moon rose resplendent in the southern horizon. She stood at the window and counted the hours by the moon's progress. Midnight had long passed over by her reckoning when the door of her cell opened noiselessly.

"Are you ready?" whispered a soft voice. She looked round. It was a young Arab in turban and white mantle; two pistols in his girdle and a sword at his side.

Although she had so longed for her liberator, she could not repress a trembling spell.

"I have bribed the porter," he continued. "Fear nothing, fairest flower. Come, why dost thou tarry? Is not Mohammed Bitiwi, who perils his life for thee, worthy of thy confidence? I have sworn to save thee: and never did a son of the Beni-Augad break his word for good or ill. Outside waits my lightning steed: I set thee upon his back and thou art saved!"

"O Mohammed, you forgot the town gates!"

"Let not that disturb thee, maiden, who art worthy to be the consort of a noble Sheik. My four hundred men are in ambush there, we shall storm it."

"My lord is brave and mighty," she replied. "But far be it that men's blood should flow to save a poor girl's life!"

"Wondrous pearl, what matters the blood of slaves? Art thou

not worthy that men should die for thee? Come and be my bride. My soul burns for thee—since I have seen thy beauty, I am no more lord of myself.”

He spoke with the earnest, low tones of passion. She shuddered and gazed at him in amazement. Then she turned away and laid her glowing face in her hands.

“Come, beloved!” he whispered, placing his arm around her.

She disengaged herself and stepped back. “Enough, O Sheik! Go and leave me alone. Have you forgotten I am a Jewess? Too lowly to be your spouse, too good to be your wife’s slave? Go and save yourself. I will never follow you from this house. Greet my parents lovingly, Prince, I pray you, and pardon your handmaid; it is better she should die!”

“What do I know of thy parents?” he answered with vexation. “Shall I tell a lie because Tahara does? I risk my life for thee, for thee and for me!”

“I am determined,” she replied firmly. “Farewell!”

He opened his mantle, and approached her. It seemed as if he were about to wrap her in it and carry her forth.

Esther regarded him attentively. “My lord, why do you seek death and my shame? A cry from me, and yon slaves who sleep in the yard, are in the cell. Be magnanimous as your former intention, and leave me!”

“Thou art right!” he said, bowing his head. “It would be madness to force thee; Allah be merciful to thee, thou flower of Paradise!”

“Farewell, Sheik who compassionateth God’s creatures! May I ask a favor?”

“Speak.”

“Let Tahara go to my parents and tell them I have forgiven her, and I wish they should do the same. She is to tell them that my love for my parents and my brother was my comfort to the last, and let her give a full account of my last day, that I may know I shall be remembered.”

“I myself will deliver thy message in the city by the sea. May the All-Merciful take thee under His protection!”

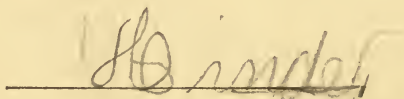
“And you, my noble lord!”

END OF THE STORY OF THE JEWESS OF TANGIERS.

I stopped. Her work had glided from the hands of my auditor, her breast heaved violently, and with her eyes hanging greedily upon my lips, she sat there with a mournful and yet exultant expression in her face.

“Go on, Samuel, pray.”

“There is little more to relate. A simple marble slab is pointed out in the Jewish cemetery in Fez, and both Moors and Arabs make pilgrimages to it to pray. It is the grave of the martyred Esther Hachuel. She died in a manner worthy of her God, of her people, of herself. Poets praise her memory. Mohammedan fanaticism grows silent, and the down-trodden Jew rises erect, at the mention of the daughter of Hachuel!”



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## LETTER XVI.

FEBRUARY 8TH, 185—.

“UNCLE, why do you avoid me now?” I said. “Do you not see what I suffer, and how I am anxious for truth?”

“For truth?” he repeated, shaking his head. “Have you prepared a place for it then, or do you wish to see it like the inquisitive disciple of Schiller’s Hierophant?”

“How do you mean, uncle?”

“If you only want to gaze at it, I can spare you the trouble of raising the curtain. There is something behind it quite different from what the cunning poet has induced the public to believe.”

“And what is behind it, uncle?”

“Nothing, O inquisitive scholar!”

“You speak in enigmas.”

“Mock on, O metaphysician. Let us spare ourselves the trouble of tearing away the vail from good Dame Nature—I meant to say from Isis; let us spare ourselves the terror of the initiated.”

"You a skeptic! Who would have thought that?"

"Perhaps you will call me a Zealot later. But let us drop the Greek names and indeed general names altogether. Tell me, do you not coincide with Aristotle's opinion, that we can not imagine anything in our mind which we have not already encountered with our senses?"

"Certainly."

"What then can I do with your mind, if I do not know whether what it lacks, has been already presented to your senses? It is as if I were to show you pictures in a stereopticon, and you were to think that I had foolishly omitted to put a light in the lantern."

"You are right!" I replied. "I ought to have reposed full confidence in you long ere this."

Then I told him all my past history, without attempting to conceal anything, my aims, and my sufferings. How at length I had found shelter in Religion, and had dared to enter his house as a missionary; the struggle with my conscience then, and how, moved by his words, I had examined once again the contents of my adopted faith and then rejected them as nonsensical. How, finally more wretched and solitary than ever, I sighed for peace and truth, how acutely I felt remorse that I had degraded myself in my own eyes, speaking with him against my own conviction and behaving falsely.

"Not remorse, not penitence, my son: *amendment* is the word. Return. You may not regret the way the Lord has led you, since it has brought you to His end; but you must *return*, Samuel; never mind remorse!"

"Return, uncle? Whither?"

"Unhappy boy!" he continued, gazing on me with compassion, "as if I did not soon enough perceive the disease with which you were suffering! But have confidence, and you will soon be better than if you had never suffered at all. Do you know the name of your ailment? It was the struggle between Nature and Education. True Jewish nature as yours is, you felt the yearning for Truth, for Reality beyond everything. There exists an innate demand within you, to think and to live, to bring the internal and external worlds into harmony. But this modern world of ours is topsy-turvy, satisfies its feeling with fancies instead of facts, and its mind with ideas in place of experience. Woe to the Heathen who possesses a holy



love for truth, and open eyes for the wonders of eternal Nature, if he can not hold aloof with the iron resignation of a Goethe; or with the giant power of a Shakespeare, lodge responsibility upon the unintelligible Supreme Will. You, my son, were a Heathen by education, if I may use the word for a non-Israelite without any contemptuous signification. Your ancestors had left you the longing for the Eternal in your soul: being brought up in Heathen schools, you sought to define it like Plato, before you knew what it was. Yes, in your soul was the longing for holy Truth. And have you not learned from the Strangers that they do not possess it? That the initiated can do nothing better than thicken the vail in front of Isis more and more, and so drive off inquiring disciples with threats, in order to save at least the symbol of Truth?"

"Yes, I did learn it: their wisdom satisfied my reason, but never my heart."

"Because they seek to prove that which they must take for granted. But *we* know that we possess existence in ourselves, and demand its proof just as little as we do that of a father's love for his children. The sole God, the Eternal Creator of the universe is an actuality, a reality to us, which we acknowledge from individual as well as national experience. For He hath revealed Himself as unalterable to this nation's heart, through the thousands of years of its history; has stamped His seal on its fate, that it may be His and His alone; that it may dedicate to Him its existence, that all the world may know that He alone is God, and all others vain idols! It is thus He revealed Himself to our forefathers, it is thus He reveals Himself daily to those who seek him; for He fashioned the people of Israel as a proof of His existence. And as the Eternal always employs natural means to work His aim, in order to spread the knowledge of His existence over the earth, He has engraved its typical idea in the hearts of Israel. It is no merit in Judah that it cleaves to the Lord: it has no alternative. Do you see now, my son, what it was tortured you, and what you in vain sought to allay by plunging into the whirlpool of the world, the doctrines of philosophy and the dogmas of the priesthood? He laid in your heart, as in the heart of every Jew, the germ of love most fervent, of the surest consciousness of your God. You felt Him as reality, and as the Prince of Justice. But you had no one to point out your treasure

to you, you learned the ways of the Strangers, suffered with them ; for as a father trains his children, chastising them wisely, so the Eternal trains mankind. It is the solving of this world-enigma that tortures humanity. Many have sought to penetrate it, and a single fragment of His splendor was sufficient to delight and entrance them. Look how Lucretius idolizes his Epicurus who seems to hold out eternal bliss to him ; look at the Buddhists, the Christians, the Mohammedans : they only got as far as vague suppositions, for they attempted to go beyond their nature ; and therefore their deeds never expressed their thoughts : they but blossomed, and then withered. Israel alone stamped out its religion in the semblance of its idea, like a natural production ; Israel alone blossomed, and has not faded away. Each new spring-time of the nations, as the Talmud says, the Eternal renews the vigor of His people. Israel is happy in its faith, happy in its knowledge, knows no discord in individual minds, no discord in the world. Each true Jew is a man ; the whole nation, scattered far and wide as it is, without a country, without political alliance, is yet a single people, a band of brothers united mentally. Certainly, if facts have speech, these facts are trumpet-tongued, and if Truth is acknowledged when the reality is patent before us, then let the nations of the earth open now their eyes. They will object, ‘Suppose the persecutions of the Middle Ages had annihilated the nation, as it was intended they should : what then would have become of Israel’s mission?’ Would the Eternal have *permitted* that the knowledge of His existence and attributes should disappear from the earth? Did He not give us for our support that immortal idea which we proclaim each morn and night : ‘Hear, O Israel?’<sup>13</sup> I do not admire our nation because it possessed this idea and kept it. I have often watched a Jew-beggar traveling from town to town : he starves and thirsts, and will not break the dietary laws, and the Evil one amuses himself with tempting him. And when I see how the idea of the Deity makes his feet of iron and his heart a very paradise of peace, over the walls of which the scorner’s mockery can not reach, then I confess—‘Surely this is the finger of God!’ Our grandeur lies in the past, and in the future as well ; we enjoy the happiness of having attained the goal of our longing, and yet of working still towards it. This is the source of our satisfaction with the present, for this life to us is a real life, it is the path marked

out by our divine Leader. Israel has never feared death, Israel has always loved life; its intellect was always too strong and clear for the old-women's tales of the nations about the future world, its heart too brave to succumb to the influence of the poison of their disgust with the world. Ay, Israel has remained true to its duty, is as upright in the world as some lofty rock in the surging ocean, buffeted by the restless waves: and the nations, torn with mutual dissension, driven hither and thither by various desires and illusions, shall yet recognize that those true and noble heroes of the Jewish and ancient history are no fables, and that the riddle of existence lies in the hands of this people? Forwards, then, ye wanderers! carry it over the whole earth! Already ye have penetrated beyond the broad Atlantic, and there is scarce a spot wherein in silent language, like the forest's trees, ye do not preach by your presence alone, the wonders of the Almighty!"

My uncle paused then for a long time, and I did not dare to interrupt his silence. At last he continued:

"The great races of the world are formed with varied bodily powers, with varied mental ones. The Father of all endowed two great families with the purest conceptions of His essence, the Shemites and the Indo-Germans. Of these again, two nations were chosen as representatives, the Jews, and the Hellenes or Greeks. Both of these States became models for mankind, men were educated in their literary productions, without ever equaling them. Both developed themselves independently and peculiarly, and each is quite distinct to-day from the other. But the people of the earth are yet undecided to which of these two flags they shall give in their allegiance. The natural inclination of the Europeans, derived from relationship, draws them towards the Hellenes, but their needs towards the Shemites.

"The only certainty in our human constitution is Sense, Perception. For our natural capacity for Perception is not subject to that purely human accident, Appearance, which asserts its sway over all Intellect, even as low as the animals, but in a restricted amount, since they possess only individual truths. Reason, which incessantly generalizes, hastening from the particular instance to the general rule, is entirely subject to it: the phenomena of nature, which the nervous system presents with mathematical exactness to our perception, are incorrectly conceived. Thus the earth *appears* to us to stand still, and the



sun to move, the waves to pass away. Without artificial aids, the microcosm inside our heads is quite a distorted picture of the macrocosm without. To assist this infirmity, Bacon wished to eliminate the images formed by reason : but besides this negative assistance, something more positive is needed : what this is, we have not to explain here. Let this proposition be sufficient : Reason alone is not adequate to explain the things that are.

“ We Hebrews conceive by means of the organs of perception, which are not subject to appearance, and because we feel something, we *know* it is there, not as an abstraction, but as a real and actual being, which we call God. This Being we perceive as the originator of the worlds of nature and morality, for we can not separate the moral from the divine. There you have the source of our contentedness, our restraining bonds for the sensual, otherwise unlimited desire. We feel Him, and know Him to be the creator of the world, exalted high above all His works : and therefore it is we despise and abominate the audacity of the Heathens, who mingle the human with the divine. To the Father of all living belongs each emotion of our heart. Burning love and gratitude, fidelity and humility, fill the hearts of the Hebrews. The Eternal is the contents of their life, they belong to Him, He is their Lord, their judge, their father ; they are His property, His children, His servants. This idea grew in prominent men to a gigantic, a holy passion. Was it less wondrous that the voice of the Lord announced his will in words of fire in their hearts, than if He had spoken to them with human voice ? Did not the people feel that to them alone was given the word which remained unintelligible to others ? Chide Moses now, if you can, for his rigor against idolators, or Elijah, for the blood of the priests of Baal : it was the Ruler of the world who commanded through them, and in His hand they were but involuntary instruments.

“ The perception of the Hellene teaches him to conceive *single instances* in their reality. Just as we carry the reality of *general* idea in us, and reproduce it as Religion, so the Hellene bears Form in his breast. As soon as any natural production pleases and renders him enthusiastic, he is able to reproduce it before him by means of Art. The idea of *beauty* is his inheritance. While holy joy pervades the Hebrew's heart, as he praises God in inspired words of prophecy, while tears spring to his eyes when he sees a deed of strict justice



performed, the heart of the Hellene is enchanted with the sight of beauty. It is in this manner that I can comprehend the enthusiasm of the Italian of the *renaissance* period, for waving cornfields and handsome human beings, as also the emotion of that northern artist, who burst into tears at the first sight of a collection of antiques. Goethe, too, acknowledges that he never could dissociate the idea of Truth from that of Beauty.

"Thus we should not wonder that the Shemites and the Indo-Germans never understood each other: that the Romans accused us of godlessness, and that the Christians reproached Spinoza with Atheism.

"While we at bottom have only one idea, to the development of which our whole life is devoted, while its culture alone affords us satisfaction in existence, other races seek their happiness in the creation of beauty, which is by nature of a manifold character. They find Ideality, that is, the connection of the Finite with the Infinite, in Form, while we find it in Matter. We recognize but one State, which can not be dissociated from religion. For us, the wondrous announcements of the prophets, the blessing and curse of our teacher Moses, are commands of the Almighty. But they, possessing only particular ideas, have, for their own welfare, to separate Church and State, and make a thousand different forms and shades out of it.

"As the Shemite's *feeling* is directed toward the Universal, so his *intellect* is concerned with the particular. Hence his shrewdness, his skill in things practical: hence his inclination for Philology and Natural Science, his proneness to hair-splitting, and his not unfrequent lack of method and system.

"It is difficult to understand a nature diametrically opposite to one's own; but I hope I do not deceive myself when I assert that the *intellect* of the Indo-German is directed toward the *Universal*. It is evident they seek to replace through their intellect what is lacking to them in feeling. But their mind, left to its own resources, is only able to generalize single ideas, or to conceive its empty forms as true Universals, as absolutely existent things. Hence their manipulation with concepts, theoretical diagrams of abstractions which do not exist but in their minds; hence their division of the mind into reason, intellect, and imagination, which are nothing but the application of the same faculty to different things. They too have the longing

after the absolute, but their road is that of perceptive intellect : for this end too they will offer up their lives, like the Shemite for his God. Thus the elder Pliny fell a victim to his thirst for knowledge : of how many brave *savants* has Africa demanded the lives ! All praise to this endowment : this intellect, when corrected by experience, has revealed to us God's manifestations, which we call Laws of Nature. Only just as we suffer from lack of method, they are hurt by too much system : if we are inclined to be too practical in knowledge, they are apt to forget the furtherance of utility or to despise it.

"The purity of the Hellenes' comprehension of Nature is astonishing. Even in the ruins of the plastic arts and literature we see they were, and to judge from the course of history, will remain the only people who possessed the power of giving things an adequate expression : their creations are eternal models of form. Even to the Indo-German of to-day, that time of harmless or unconscious interpretation of Nature, when the great poets, sculptors, and orators strove for prizes in Hellas, is the ideal of life. But the worm lay hid in the Hesperian apple, and Homer already lets a significant sigh escape him :

For ah, what is there, of inferior birth,  
That breathes or creeps upon the dust of earth :  
What wretched creature of what wretched kind,  
Than man more weak, calamitous, and blind ? (*Iliad*, XVII., 508.)

"He was right, the glorious bard. For the life of mankind can not be built up on the same basis as the arts can. It could only have been attempted with the idea of Measure or Amount, which is at the foundation of Art too : in this way they might have had a limiting, *i. e.*, a moral rule, but how insufficient a one ! The drama of life which our Genesis describes so wondrously in the fate of the First Pair, was necessarily repeated among the Hellenes. Socrates showed them their need, and though they slew him, the consciousness thereof was not killed with him. The shrewd schools of the Sophists proved that their morality was nothing but an abstraction from the sense of the beautiful, and long before the French Cyclopædists, Protagoras showed that man himself, or as those more modern ones said, Egotism, was the measure of all things. Herewith the bridge between Man and Nature was destroyed : in vain did prudent and noble men like Thucydides and Aristophanes point out the abyss into which the new doctrine was leading the people : in vain did

highly-gifted natures like Plato and Zeno endeavor to fill up the chasm: the cobwebs of speculation blinded those who had spun them.

“Intellect should not be blamed that it was unable to find the idea for lack of which the ancient world went to ruin. Its essence is self-consciousness: the discovery of a new idea is a prophetic anticipation of the future. You must not think those philosophers did not possess the purest moral doctrines: you can scarcely mention a moral principle to which it were impossible to adduce a parallel quotation from some old poet or philosopher. Their fault was, they referred what belonged to feeling, to intellect; that they sought to prove morality, when it was not existent in the people. It is true, it was too early to pursue the other road. The soul of the Hellenes, susceptible to beauty, had not yet room for the universal human law, *i. e.*, for morality as a divine demand. They had first to learn from the results of their principles, from dissension in the State, in society, and in the family, that they did not possess the true principles: it was a painful process of preparation. For the Hellenes were too shrewd to permit a prominent mind to persuade them their intellect's conclusions were real, *i. e.*, divine truths: their teachers were thus content to found schools, not religions. Buddha, it is true, did attempt the former course, and at the same time dethroned the deity of the Brahmans, but it was among a childish people, and the deity was one erected only by human hands.

“As Hellas now had impressed its artistic idea upon its life, so did we our idea of God: our constitution retained the stamp of the undisturbed order of the world. Just as the invisible Lord of Nature reveals Himself in the natural law, He ruled Israel through the moral law. No formidable warrior who traced his descent from voluptuous gods: no mystic priest who held our fates in his hand, had dominion over our nation. Justice and mercy, the loftiest attributes of the eternal Father, embodied in the word of the law given us by our teacher Moses, these bore the crown in Israel. The philanthropist will gaze back, not without emotion and enthusiasm, upon this gigantic attempt, the only one free from interested motives, known to history. Steadily and consciously steering towards the highest aims of humanity, that attempt, as everything which emanates from our teacher Moses, exhibits wondrous wisdom and energy. Of a truth,



this man, as is the case among the Heathen, would appear like some superhuman giant, did he not stand in the shadow of his God before whom all language is dumb: but generations most remote will remember Amram's son, who was great alike in life and in death, with love and gratitude.

"Yes, it was an attempt, for we too needed a long training. And who knows, O thou grand Leader of ours, whether after more than three thousand years of trial, we are ready yet for thy divine idea? But thou didst lay the foundation of humanity with a mild hand, for it was the Eternal Master guided it! Patience—we have approached nearer to the end. Formerly, surrounded by the wild world of the Heathen, enticed by their sensual, voluptuous civilization, blinded by the power of despots, our people could not withstand temptation. After the example of the Heathen, they surrendered their independence to a human monarch. But the consciousness of the eternal Truth was never lost after Moses' epoch. Ever anew the divine flame sprang forth, and though the Master's grand constitution had fallen into decay, his mind remained for a thousand years immortal: he spoke out of the great teachers' mouths whom we style prophets, and who, without fear of man and with unselfishness, announced the will of the Almighty to the ignorant mob. Then Judah went into the Babylonian captivity. There, the self-consciousness of the nation was aroused by the Chaldeans. They recognized that the ruler of the world was their inheritance, that it was their mission to devote themselves thereto. *This*, if I discard the heathenish influences, was the effect of the Babylonian Exile, and not a purified religion; or one derived from the Magi, as many *literati* have most learnedly proved: to judge by whose results, moreover, the genuine Jews were Chaldeans and Egyptians!"

"But, at all events, we evidently received from them the doctrine of the immortality of the soul?" I interposed.

"Evidently, Samuel? It seems to me one of the highest excellencies of the Torah, that it gives us no positive information on this topic which God has entirely veiled from us. Our great teachers had no need to call in deception, a Heaven, a Hell, or a Hades, or a Paradise populated with Houries. Pure Judaism has no place for this doctrine, because *it is self-understood*. Doubts of immortality only proceed from doubts of God's existence: where the latter is an



unconditioned certainty, all anxiety for the future disappears. Like the lad Isaac to his aged father, we bow our heads to our Creator. The father will not murder his son, the artist will not shatter his handiwork, the righteous judge not doom him condemned to sin through error. The Heathen might well tremble for his eternal life, for he feared he would be after death in the hands of an enemy.

“But to return. The self-consciousness which had destroyed the life of the Hellenic world, instilled deep repose into the Jewish heart. Each individual recognized that his life was founded upon the eternal rock, each one possessed and studied the Law. The Lord no longer awakened prophets among us, for the people recognized then their lofty mission. This consciousness of walking in the ways of the Lord is expressed in the Messianic hope: the faithful observers of the Law must at length attain the goal, soon must holy peace rule over the whole earth, and all nations acknowledge the Eternal, the holy One of Israel, as the Creator and Governor, in order that henceforth man should recognize man as his brother. But Israel, who was not to live for itself, was as yet very far from the goal. The period, which was the end of its sufferings then, was but the commencement of new and unheard-of tortures! But praised be God! Not even then did we doubt His love and justice, and patiently we traversed the road which His will pointed out to us, although sore it was, and thorny, and apparently without end. Then began the great martyrdom of the Jewish nation, which has lasted more than two thousand years: Israel had then to know its post and to maintain it!

“Up to the time when, as the result of Alexander's conquests, the Hellenic spirit took root in the East, our relations with other nations were entirely of a political character: Hellenism first perceived that in us there lived a principle directly hostile to it and to all Heathendom. And so the fathers of civilization looked into each other's eyes, measured each other, and shrank back. Each one considered himself as the sole rightful leader of mankind, and his opponent, his enemy unto death. But what was the Jewish people, the weak remnant of two exiled tribes, politically subject to those very Greeks, and without any scientific importance: what were they in comparison with their opponents, who ruled the whole Orient, and whose glorious literature swayed the intellectual life of the

nations then as now? Antiochus Epiphanes began the bloody persecution of the just God's law, but Hellenism was grandly vanquished by the Maccabees. Then mighty Rome laid her iron heel upon our neck and swore our extermination: she succeeded only in overthrowing our political independence. But not yet did Heathenism cease from troubling us: what bloody Rome failed to do, the Christian and the Mohammedan essayed. Who can read the history of our people in servitude without emotion? Declared outlawed, murdered, dishonored, disgraced, the scattered wretches trembled for their lives for centuries and centuries again, *and did not die!* Fools were ye persecutors! Ye strove against the Eternal! We did not perish: the chain of Israel's congregations spreads wondrously to-day over the whole globe! Thou hast preserved, O God, the vessel of thy doctrine, and wilt reveal Thy will at the appointed time!

“But it was not only the Heathen world that saw it had here met a spirit which it must either vanquish, or be vanquished. Judah too gradually recognized that it had found a foeman worthy of its steel. It was not those who, crowned with ivy, sacrificed to Bacchus at the command of the Syrian tyrant, that were detested by our ancestors: their deed excited universal disgust, like those wretches who, in the Middle Ages, and perhaps now, vended apostasy for high Church honors. Far more dangerous were those who imagined they could serve two lords at once, and who strove to infuse Hellenic philosophy into Jewish revelation, and therewith Greek immorality into Jewish chastity. Though the doctrine of a just Providence, and with it that of human responsibility, was recognized; though for the enlightened Hebrew the idols of the Heathen were destroyed, he was not steeled against their arts of seduction. So our fathers determined to forge such armor. They introduced the Mosaic law into the practice of daily life, and so compelled even the ignorant man to execute his religion by his *acts*: they called this, ‘making a fence for the law.’ The second motto of these pious men, who are styled the Men of the Great Assembly, enjoined the diffusion of the knowledge of this Law and those observances, and runs, ‘Increase disciples!’ The third maxim of these much-maligned Pharisees is worthy of remembrance:—‘Be merciful in judgment!’

“On this foundation the Talmudic law of observances, unwritten at first, was erected, like the Mosaic code, free from conscience-fetters and priestly tyranny.

“As a Jew, without hatred for any other religion, I would prefer to pass over that one which arose in our midst, but which stands now farther removed from us than even its sister faith, Islam. But I promised to speak about it to you.

“At that period, Hellenism was in a state of deep ferment. The more the falsity of bare Egotism, the cheerlessness of the doctrine of Fate, became evident to the world, the more anxiously did men seek for some superhuman support. While the veneration of the gods in former times had been a pretty idea, and a powerful help to weak humanity, the religious frenzy which now set in among the troubled states of the period, induces a feeling of repugnance in the beholder. Men sought to secure the aid of Heaven by force, to compel it. From all quarters they dragged strange gods together and bribed them with sacrifices: they dazed the imagination with mysteries: conjurors ruled Nature through demons, cast out devils from men, and held intercourse with them through men: in short the same deplorable signs which we see in the present day among disintegrating religions, were exhibited then. Philosophy, too, which could not pass the limits of its Hellenic nature, was compelled to indorse the people's superstition with its wisdom. Hence, in that age, sprang up the New-Platonic school; in our own, that of Hegel.

“The Jews of Alexandria, living in the midst of all this fermentation and proud of their Grecian enlightenment, succumbed to its influence. But the rebellion against the Torah was to proceed not from a corrupted colony, but from the mother-country herself.

“It is extremely difficult to give a verdict upon the events of that epoch which shall to any extent approach the truth. It is almost as difficult as to write an unprejudiced history of the Punic Wars. For all the reports and accounts come from our opponents, and again, even of these, none are contemporary. No well-informed Christian will for a moment expect me to accept the Gospels of the New Canon as authentic sources. It is now an undoubted fact that they were written in a later age, and besides them, there exist



innumerable other accounts, all divergent. A few epistles of the apostles are almost all the scanty material there is. I will, of course, readily admit that they base their Gospels on an older Hebrew work, whence they have borrowed their Master's sayings.

“What was the conviction of the son of Mary himself? Yes, let me, as is our custom, not call him by his name. You know how far removed I am from anything like religious hatred or bigotry, but what can be more painful to an Israelite, who is daily accustomed to declare the unity of God with pious fervor, than that a son of his people should share with a Bacchus and a Hercules, a Caligula and a Heliogabalus, the somewhat doubtful honor of deification?

“What the leading idea of this man was, remains undiscovered. He appears to have been one of those tenderly-emotional natures, capable of the purest, most refined morality, such as are not unfrequently to be found among our people. His own purity and lack of passion deceived him as to the power of human desires in general, and like Spinoza, he seems to have thought it possible to substitute individual feeling in the stead of a fixed code. This much-vaunted aim, which undoubtedly originated with the Essenes, is already an approach to Heathenism, which delights in extremes, and which was ignorant of the strictly moral sensuousness of Mosaism. The Heathens felt the torture of their desires: it was not without reason that they called Eros, Love, Cupid, *‘the fearful.’* Socrates exults that he has passed out of the dominion of the tyrant by reason of his old age! Hence the ideal of the Heathen is morality separated from the senses: just as Plato regards the body as the prison of the soul. The Jew too, while preaching his unconditioned ideality, looks for the truth outside Nature; his so-called love is the touching longing of a pious heart, which every day is rudely contradicted by the reality of things. Herein he is like the Hindoo reformer, who extends his compassion to all breathing creatures, who sacrifices himself a thousand times for everything that has breath. Both these men, therefore, seemed to the Heathen as something super-human, as gods, whereas in truth they only possessed something which was rare among men. The eternal Creator has sketched out the line of human life as one of mortal combat with evil: on all sides our progress is hemmed in by weeds and parasites; to have compassion for the robber who lives on our blood, is but a sickly



mania which has poisoned the world with the venom of hypocrisy and priestly tyranny."

"Rabbi, are you not justifying the reproach cast on the Jews, of being unable to tear themselves from sensuality?"

"I accept it, *and justify it*," he answered smiling; "I deem it better to look the truth into the face than to leap away over it by means of pretty phrases. Can you live without senses? Is your body a less wonderful piece of workmanship than what you call your mind? Is there one moral idea which does not arise from a sensual impression: whence should the former come if not from the latter? From your preachers perhaps?"

"God preserve us from the preachers, uncle!"

"We wish to be moral, Samuel, therefore we treat our sensual impulses as an authorized power, according to fixed rules and laws. We do not believe that we can manage them by condemning the sinfulness of the flesh in theory, and in practice submitting to their rule. But let us return to what we were considering.

"I do not think it can be doubted that at that time Buddhist missionaries had come to Syria. The fundamental ideas of the New faith point back to Buddhism, some five hundred years its senior. Of such a nature are the doctrines of the destruction of the world, of hereditary sin, redemption by a mediator, the stress which is laid upon suffering and self-denial, and the negation of all worldliness. And not only are the results the same here as there: not only have both a hierarchy, pope, and monasticism, even a confessional, the tonsure, and the rosary are held in common. The resemblance which extends even to the shape of the Bishop's crozier and the garb of the priests, can not be a purely accidental one. But whatever may have been the leading idea of our hero, certain it is that the Messianic idea of the people was his point of dependence. He seems to have planned the introduction of a pure inner life, and when this project came to naught, nothing remained but to postpone the founding of the so-called Kingdom of Heaven into the future: of course, into the immediate future. When this too did not occur, his partisans were able to help themselves out of the difficulty, partly by means of allegorical interpretation and fiction, and partly by translating this kingdom of heaven into the *future world*, whence certainly there was no fear of any one coming to disprove their assertion. Now the

Jews could not understand this spiritualism; they demanded reality instead of words. We must pardon them this weakness: let us remember they were not philosophers.

“Whatever may have been the secret dogma of this man, his personal religion has had but little effect upon the history of the world. The wide-spread church which calls itself after him, Messianism, *i. e.*, Christianity, is by no means the bearer of his doctrines, which had no use for either Catholics or Protestants. You ask why? Because that man’s religion was Judaism: true, a somewhat sentimental conception of the same: true too, somewhat mingled with Hindooism; but in substance *Judaism*, detested Judaism: this even the legendary history of the man bears out. What orthodox Jew of the present day would not have applauded him, when, on being questioned as to the chief commandment, he answered:—‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the one God! And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. This is the first command, and the second is like this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!’ (Mark xii., 29–31.) The confession of faith of the orthodox, *viz.* the Trinitarian Christians, runs it is true somewhat differently. But surely their lord is not merely acting the hypocrite, when he asserts again and again, that no jot of the Mosaic law is to be repealed.<sup>14</sup>

“What could Heathenism do with this orthodox Jew? We were thoroughly detested. The old Romans made the adorers of the Ineffable Being worshipers of an ass’s head, and we, who abominate every food containing blood, were held to be cannibals by the so-called Christians of the Middle Ages. If then a new law was to be announced to the Heathen, it had to be necessarily not the creed of the hated Jews. And it was for this reason that the personal disciples of this man never erected any institutions which were able to survive. For at the start, the Christians differed from the Jews in nothing but the belief that the Messiah had already appeared, and during their lifetimes would come again to found his kingdom; in all other regards, they were Mosaic Jews as their fathers had been. But when they found he did not come, they gave up the Messianic idea, and either returned to the ranks of the Jews, or, like Paul, separated entirely from the Old faith. *This man* is the real founder of the new religion, called Christianity. He recognized with ready gaze the predisposed nature of the Heathen to men-

tal visionarism and sensual indulgence, and his impatience under the yoke of the Law, which had become hateful to him and too onerous. This man had never enjoyed the living example of his master; he had grown up, not in Palestine, but in Cilicia, among Heathens: he accordingly dared to propound a religion of his own, and in the character of a later enthusiast, interpret in his own fantastic manner, the history and doctrine of him of Nazareth who had already become mythical. What liberties has he not taken with thee, friend of Nazareth! Of a truth, thou didst deserve a better commemoration! Thou didst desire that eternal justice and love should rule over men, immediately and without forms, and alas, poor visionary! thy bleeding corpse has been regarded for centuries as the form wherein these Heathens see their God; thy flesh and blood—O pitiful madness!—have been devoured by thy blinded adorers, as expiation of their sins, just as the wild Jagas feast on the brains of their wise men in order to acquire their wisdom!

“Well, God’s will be done! In those times He was preparing for the spreading of His holy name among the Heathens, to train their hearts for the reception of His idea. Let Him then judge the time of their maturity; we wait in patience, for our Guardian slumbers not nor sleeps.

“Paul then laid bold hands on the very life-germ of his people. We know the Eternal, who has made all things, to be high-exalted above all creatures, and willingly submit to Him. But the Heathens, who knew not His greatness, dared, and dare to-day, to harbor the impious thought that mankind can raise themselves to God, assume the nature of the eternal being. Paul understood well how to mingle the divine with the human. Man became God, God became man: there was the prophetic longing of the Heathens realized, their vanity satisfied. The fable recounted of Hercules, that he had ascended to Olympus after purification by fire, had been almost re-enacted in their own time. Men were not wanting who had witnessed the God-man’s process of purification with their own eyes, or who at least had heard thereof from eye-witnesses. This Nazarene too with his cross, was by no means an unfamiliar idea: this symbol of the slain God was to be met with even among the ancient Egyptians and Assyrians: and the son of a virgin was a well-known personage from the realms of the Myths.



“But why did this mighty man allow himself to be put to death? For this too Paul has an answer. How cunningly does he interweave Indian metaphysics with the then reigning ideas of the universe. Bloody wars, fomented by Rome, tore and lacerated the world unceasingly. Judea had sighed under the yoke of that Herod who was characterized by the words which Josephus lays in the mouth of the Jewish ambassador to Augustus, as rather a beast than a man upon the throne; and then came the Procurators, whose atrocities caused the people to wish the days of even Herod back again. If now among the cheerful Jews who enjoyed Nature, there could arise a sort of fear of sensuality, how much more easily in the Heathen world, which felt its iron rule as that of a tyrant? Thus Paul touched the sentiment of the age in its sore point when he set up the Indian doctrine of the sinfulness of the flesh as the dogma of Christianity. Therewith the knot, if yet untied, was at least sundered. There was thy comfort, O Heathendom! for which your Cicero strove unwearingly!

“Not in vain has the wisdom of the Brahmans been extolled: hear it: ‘Sensuality is the root of all evil, hence ye have the way to attain the road to virtue.’ This principle then had to be discovered in some manner in Jewish tradition, and be indorsed by the appearance of the new god on earth. Accordingly, Paul inserted the Indian doctrine of Hereditary Sin in the Mosaic account of our first parents’ disobedience, a doctrine by which the Buddhists explain the existence of evil and pain, of old age and death. And just as the Hindoo believes that the curse of his evil actions and the blessings of his meritorious ones accompany the soul through its thousandfold bodily existence, so Paul, in a superficial manner, it is true, made sin hereditary unto the latest generations. What a ridiculous tissue, Apostle! Is *that* the God of your fathers? That the God of Justice and of Love? That the God who compassionateth His creatures, and whose goodness filleth the earth? The furious Eastern despot is satisfied with slaying the children of his enemy: but *your* God persecutes unto death, even the posterity of the thousandth generation, because their fathers thoughtlessly sinned! And you call this tyrant a God of love? You should have reflected a moment, Paul, before you thus corrected Father Abraham. Even in the person of the lad Isaac the Eternal rejected human sacrifices, and yet—you make Him out as exulting in the agony of ‘his only begotten son.’



“You grant that the Lord has selected Israel and sanctified it, and yet, despite all this holiness, He suffers this chosen one with whom He had had intimate intercourse, to linger in sinfulness. For the iniquity of our ancestors had not been atoned.

“‘Do ye now see why the Messiah descended to earth and why he suffered death? It is true, it is not clear yet why he did not come sooner: but it is plain that he offered a human, or better a divine sacrifice of himself in order to appease the Judge, who for four thousand years had been wroth on account of that apple-bite, and so save mankind. O yes, that was clear, as clear as the noonday sun! Yea, ye are redeemed: Paul guarantees it you!’

“*This* then is the age of piety and peace,’ the Jews muttered to themselves with a sigh: ‘this is that glad age, now when the legions plant their eagles in the Holy City: this the golden age of the Romans when they bend before the matricide on the throne!’

“‘Have faith, have faith in the Redeemer!’ replied the Hindoo-Jew; ‘have faith in him, and ye are redeemed!’

“Paul has been accused of unscrupulousness, because, with palpable lack of truth, he placed the blissful realms of peace in the sinful world of the present, or rather, because with Rabbinical dialectic, he proclaimed it to be the metaphysical process of this redemption. I think he has been wrongly censured. The enthusiastic disciple was on the contrary *convinced*, that, as soon as all men would accept his faith, the time of general bliss would arrive: for in that world of his in which each man loves his neighbor more than himself, how should war and enmity, want and dearth arise? And was he not right? Yes, *if* his code *were* accepted! God has given it eighteen hundred years, Paul. How you would be rejoiced if you could come now among the millions of your followers, from among whom, by reason of their vast *brotherly love*, all bloodshed, all crime, all hatred, and all misery long, long have disappeared!

“Thus the great Apostle’s doctrine can not have been altogether correct——”

“But, uncle, is not he the founder of moral freedom, inasmuch as he liberated morality from the law?”

“Well, so the Christians boast: let us see.

“I pointed out to you already the importance of forms, and especially in this feeble and querulous age. But do not forget that if

forms are necessary, the actual shapes they assume are not *essential* or *eternal*. There can be no greater madness than to announce any human institution as absolute and unchangeable. How holy, for instance, is marriage: one might almost assert that mankind's welfare depends upon it: and yet what a purgatory can it become, if some bigot prelate declaims it indissoluble! How excellent in its beneficial results is the institution of the Sabbath, by which a man *feels* himself to be a man; but how grievously did those Jewish warriors sin who surrendered their cities and their lives in order not to desecrate it?

"No, the *Idea* is eternal, but the very essence of *form* is *change*! Indeed, the whole and sole creative power that Man possesses on this earth, is to recast the already existing matter in new forms. Let us not suffer ourselves to be deceived by those bigoted or by those cunning ones, who would have us believe the tree must carefully preserve its dead leaves: if they are withered, let us pluck them boldly off, and the living sap will soon put forth new buds and foliage. Nowadays people dare attempt to deceive the progressive world wrestling for new forms, by holding up a caricature of what they call 'divine arrangement,' and 'order,' and hold out dead forms to courageous attempts to found new; well, the hammer of the world's history will smite them, and we shall soon see whether they be iron or clay. O my son, what would have become of this same Europe of ours, had not the pure conception of Nature and the scientific knowledge of the Hellenes enabled later generations to reveal the lie of human infallibility, and prove the untruth and the mischief of the forms that arose therefrom, and which were proclaimed everlasting! For in the dying and disintegrating Roman empire, supporting itself upon the hopelessness and turpitude of mankind, the new priesthood gained way continually: it came to be seated on the throne of the Cæsars, and it learned from insatiable Rome where to place the goal of its desires. Power and dominion slipped, as once before in India, from the hands of the warriors, and the wily priest, the deputy of God, seized the reins. And those reins fell across the neck of the Germans who founded new states in the empire. Theirs was the new blood which, poured into the veins of effete Rome, gave strength to form new periods in history.

"That that religion which is praised as the regenerator of men in all

books of history, did not do this, a glance at the miserable Western Romans will teach us, a glance at that wretched Christian Byzantium, dragging its life out for yet a thousand years: or at the Oriental Church, or indeed, at any Church, where not imbued with the Germanic and Antique spirit; but the Roman priest cast his snare round the feet of the noble German, drew the vail over his honest blue eyes, and so tamed his strength and tied him to his chariot: blinded thus, mankind groaned and worked and toiled, that their priests could live in luxury '*to the greater glory of God!*'"

"Fearful barbarism covered then the whole of Europe, proud of her enlightened culture: her intellect, her greatest endowment, had been surrendered a prisoner to the priests by both Germans and Romans. Their artistic feeling meanwhile created, in the priest's service, wondrous and mighty relics which give a hint of what the giant could have performed had he only been at liberty. Then old Byzantium was shattered by the Turks, and out rolled the gold of the Classic literature, like from the broken statue of the fable. Thou, O God! didst blind them: of their own accord they introduced their disguised destroyer into their halls; *Rome* gave the example of paying homage to *Science*. God dealt mercifully with you, ye Indo-German peoples of Europe! After a servitude of only one thousand years, He sent you the redeemer, while your relatives on the Ganges had to sigh three thousand years under the yoke of the priests. True, the Brahmans were able to set up a scheme of Divine Dispensation too, and one at the side of which the much-vaunted one of the Roman Church is the work of a bungler.

"The great Greeks and Romans of the XIV. and XV. centuries accomplished the work of mental liberation, and this period is therefore rightly named that of the *Renaissance*, of new birth. I must pass over with a word how the liberated mind, freed from priestly rule, took a lofty flight in arts and sciences, and how the national idea of the Germans, corrupted till then, and misapplied to the most unworthy uses, was able to take on fitting forms and display its virtues. When Germany attempted to shake off the priest's spiritual, *i. e.*, mystic, rule, she laid the ground, it is true, for new progress, but immediately fell back herself into the ancient theological barbarism. While England and France, content with their first achievement, developed into unthought-for prosperity, this unfortunate



country of Christians was torn for thirty years by civil war—the wickedness which they call, you know, religious war, and the effects of their pious hatred and bigotry lasted long, until in the XVIII. century, mental freedom was achieved.

“But who was it that, through the night of the Middle-Ages, while all was plunged into the horrors of civil war, who was the rock upon which the Ritter’s castle of the Roman church rose aloft to threaten mankind, and with whom the nations, let them not shut their eyes to the fact, have yet to hold a day of serious reckoning? *It was Paul*, not Peter as they declare, that appointed the proud prelates who yet rule the consciences of millions. Thus does falsehood avenge itself, even when framed with the best intentions: thus, out of the insignificant germ, the giant poison-parasite can grow. As he had proclaimed the forgiveness of sin through the death of that Messiah of his, and men naturally got anxious as to their own later sins committed since his time, his successors could plainly not help carrying on his fiction, and asserted they had received the right of pardoning from the Apostles, a right which these latter never assumed to themselves. Herewith was the mystic authority of the Priesthood founded, and for the means to carry it out, they had no need to be at a loss. When the Apostle announced that his Messiah had repealed the Law forever, he probably did not suspect that he was compelling his followers to set up a new law. Moses, the man of truth, who loved his God and his people as ever yet mortal did, Paul despised, and therefore his disciples went to the avaricious, heartless priesthood on the Ganges for a model, learnt from them how mankind must be rendered dull and stupid, in order successfully to rule over them.”

“But, uncle, you will not deny that Paul furthered morality, inasmuch as he founded what had hitherto been a matter of law, upon freedom? If the *Church* created a new law, that was not *his* intention!”

“Certainly not, my son. Just as little as the father who leaves his thoughtless son a large amount of property without restrictions, intends to make him a spendthrift: it is the result, not the intention or aim, of his action. But have patience for a moment. Since our existence is governed by form, it is possible and humanly probable, that it, though but temporary and mutable, should come to be held as eternal and unchangeable.



“It is much easier to insert into what is already before us, than to furnish something entirely new. For this reason, all our great teachers have ever pointed to God's righteous and merciful law, as to the gist of our code, and they most unhesitatingly and decidedly condemn him who thinks to fulfill this God's will by means of external forms and sanctimoniousness.

“‘Is this the fast which I have chosen? A day that a man afflict his soul, bend his head as a bulrush, and spread sackcloth and ashes for his couch? Is not this rather the fast I have willed—to sunder the snares of wickedness, to undo the bonds of prisoners, to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke?’ (Isaiah viii., 5, 6.) And what prophet ever spoke otherwise? Ay, they do not even fear to reject the sacrifices ascribed to Moses, an institution surely introduced merely to satisfy a rude people who had been accustomed to burnt-offerings.

“Treading in their footsteps, Mary's son defends morality as the essence of religion. But for all that, did Isaiah or his successors attempt to abolish the Mosaic law? Certainly not: they knew well that if they destroyed the form, they would destroy the matter too eventually. Paul the more easily struck into this path, as he was a Greek speaking to erring Greeks. Since, as we saw, the Shemite's characteristic is synthesis, and that of the Hellene analysis, the latter people had no word for Torah, which is at once doctrine and law (*Lehre* and *Gesetz*), and combines both form and matter. The Hellene separates and divides, and conceiving it in its external aspect, calls it *nomos*, law. I am sorry to say a good many among us have adopted the Heathen's conception, and speak of a ‘law of Moses.’ If we wish to translate the word Torah, it must be by ‘doctrine:’ our fathers always understood the word in this sense. But I repeat: we know neither a purely subjective doctrine, nor a purely external or objective law; just as little\* as you can separate any organism into form and matter, can you dissect the Torah. But Paul, having himself fashioned the puppet of external law, becomes forsooth a doughty assailant of the same. He even declaims against it as the author of all sin, a charge which, like all paradoxes, must have had an imposing effect on the weak-minded. Since you too have been brought up in the heart of the general prejudice which reproaches the Jews with rigid iron law, let us linger a moment upon the topic.

“I have already remarked that there are three constituents of the human mind. The most obscure, and at the same time the most powerful, is Will, which has its seat in the nerves of the spinal column. The power of action and of ruling, appears to all men to be the highest: savages as well as civilized folks prostrate themselves as soon as a lion arises in their midst. Whether he use his power for evil or for good, he is the lord of all, and the common mob, with no soul above their own daily needs, tremble under the weight of his mighty hand, and when he dies, gaze at his corpse with wondering astonishment.

“The obscurity of the Will is not lit up by any beam of light: Will is not conscious as Feeling is, nor self-conscious like Intellect. But this blind giant has an eye in Feeling, which is so nearly related to him, even bodily, and he obeys its behests forthwith. This organ, Feeling, which grasps Nature sympathetically, is, as we have said, the bearer of typical ideas,—and it is the Will which calls these hidden treasures into external life, which clothes our love and our hatred, our justice and our tyranny, our self-sacrifice and our greed, with the forms of the State, of Society: which stamps deeds that go to make up history. A powerful will, therefore, needs a powerful feeling, or if you choose, powerful passion, to govern it. For our giant Will wanders eyeless along the path of habit, and by instinct. It can be led to perform what is right only if the right contents have been placed in Feeling. But how can I rule this latter organ, that has consciousness only of other things and not of itself, and which, though appointed to rule the Will, is yet subject to it? Perhaps the third factor of the human mind, self-conscious Intellect, which is at the same time the central ruler of the voluntary nerves of motion, is able to help us out of the difficulty. But deeds dictated by the caprice of the Intellect, are weaker than those inspired by Feeling and executed by the Will. Reason is powerless as regards existent things, and must fain be content to construe them logically, and to deduce general principles from our accustomed modes of action.

“The wise Hellenes philosophized according to their deeds, which were dictated by Selfishness. This sentiment was so truly an idea of their nature, that their whole history is nothing but the results of the same. The terrified Apostle sees then in this Selfishness the very essence of all sin, which he strives to destroy through Reason. An

impossibility : for Reason can not furnish matter for Feeling : it can at most excite it and rouse it to reaction. And it is therefore that Selfishness, in spite of all the pretty phrases, is yet the supreme tyrant of the Christian world of to-day : they have changed the name, but retained the thing.

“But we too, in whom the Eternal had implanted His Universal Idea, fell into error and vice : passion and obstinacy led us astray. Our wise men determined therefore, following the example of Moses, to keep pure feelings continually aroused by means of a series of acts above all earthly things : for feelings can only be excited by acts. Hence the Ceremonial Law was framed.

“This law compels us just as little as the Torah to swear to principles or to wrest our reason : still less does it claim to rule our conscience, as does the Catholic priest. Nor is it the property of a ruling class like that of the Brahmans : no, every one is required to study it ; it is naught but the codified law of custom of the nation. The Talmudical law is the continuation of the Mosaic into daily life ; it seeks to sanctify life, not by means of *public* worship—which may lead to hypocrisy—for it is not the so-called House of God, the temple or church, that is the seat of this worship, but the house, the home, the family. This code was not given for a certain caste : Priests and Levites disappear here entirely ; it assures no bliss nor beatitude as reward, its aim is to carry the divine command into execution so that every sensual impression shall at the same time be a moral one. Religious form thus becomes a natural foundation for pure morality : he who possesses it must fain draw himself each time a fresh draught from the well of morality. As you know, this well sometimes runs dry, and men are glad to omit the tedious winding ; but with the Talmudic law, our everyday life is interwoven with a series of sweet customs, of significant ceremonies, which give a stamp of calmness and certainty to our existence. This much-abused Pharisaic ceremony accustoms you from the earliest years to moderation, makes you lord of your passions and senses. Thus do we, who are always being accused of vaunting self-righteousness, build as it were a wall of divine service round our daily lives, in recognition of our weak human nature. It guards us from sin, warns us to imitate God’s justice and avoid revenge, bids us accept suffering as His punishment or trial, and banish hatred from our heart. Thus can we never



forget the Most High: when we lie down at night, He is with us: with us too when we rise up again: He walks with us abroad and dwells within our households: when the sun rises in the morn, we call on Him, and when it sinks to rest, we praise His goodness. Thus has the master's word been fulfilled: 'Our law is not in heaven that we should say, who will fetch it for us?' It fills the heart of every Israelite, and renders him happy beyond all other sons of men.

"But Paul, or perhaps even his master, forgot that moral Matter is the justification of Sensuality, and that the sensual *form* is the guarantee of Morality: all those pretty dreams of Life in the Spirit and Truth will become realities *when men are born without bodies*. Who can doubt that such men as Paul and Spinoza, men living only in their ideas, did not need any external agents to holy feelings, or aids to a pious life? But we sensual selfish men can *not* do without them. If you have lived among men, and seen how self-interest governs them, and how they are bound by a thousand threads to base things, you will not hope to see them surrender an advantage in obedience to a decree of morality. They will not even respect that grand idea of theirs, self-sacrificing Love, the grand glitter of which blinds them, all the more that they feel themselves so far removed from anything approaching to it. Let your sophists and pulpit-orators preach and preach; their doctrines, be they what they may, will remain nothing but words, if they be not assisted by forms and ceremonies. You ask the anxious business man who, in his cares, is unconscious of night and day, summer and winter: who is bound with the fetters of his daily wants, you ask him to shake off these burdens at the word of command, in order to chasten himself by means of higher emotions? Yes, and purify all the great and small deeds of his life by means of the holy spirit of pure morality? Well then, you must first free us from the demands of the stomach, from the madness of sensual desire, from the greed for possession: then make your demand! You can not abolish the external law without abolishing the human body too.

"In this respect, the first Christians were at least consistent; they wished to do away with the forms of several human natural laws, such as property, and marriage if possible. But in vain: passion can only be combated by passion. When cares suck my heart's blood like serpents, what use to me is Reason's exhortation to think of eternity?



Scarcely mentioned, it is forgotten again. I have no time for it, I toil and groan under my burden until I get to like it, till I have sunk to be the slave of my wants, and awaken in my dying-hour and say—fool, to what end? You have been a mill horse, revolving in a circle from year to year, dragging a weight—fool, to what end? I have had no pleasure from my existence, it has fled by like the wind, noisy and empty! To what end? Therefore our wise teachers, knowing well that mere grumbling at human weakness does not remove it, ordained that we should accustom ourselves every day to turn to God at certain times, that we should sanctify and deserve, as it were, every enjoyment, by expressing a feeling of gratitude towards the Creator. And thus they oppose passion and occupation in things earthly, with passion and occupation in things divine. The Jew can not entirely succumb to his worldly desires, for the hour of prayer brings him back again into the presence of his God: whatever cares oppress me, I can cast them upon Him, to Him I can confess my needs, and my failings without blushing. When I eat my meal, I must think of Him: when I awake in the morning, my first thought belongs to Him. My whole life is thus like a coarse garment in which countless threads of gold are interwoven; while other pilgrims on earth rush onwards in haste and hurry, the Jew stands still from time to time, contemplates the way achieved and the way yet ahead, and so lets peace and calm enter his heart.

“Thus, my son, it is our duty to recall those Talmudists with heartfelt gratitude, though they have been mocked and laughed at by chimney-corner philosophers: without the armor of holy service which they forged for us, we should have fallen before the enemy, should have sunk to the level of the mob of cheats and malicious blockheads which fanatic priests would have made of us, in order that they might have the felicity of saying: *‘See how despicable are those who despised the redeeming Messiah!’*”

“The new religion which placed morality in opposition to the senses, and conceives the mind as the opponent of Matter or the Flesh, sadly mutilated the beautiful unity of human nature. It exaggerated morality and debased the gratification of the senses. Hence they have their superhuman code of morals, coupled with unnatural castigation of the flesh, with the rejection of cheerful, righteous enjoyment; and on the other side, brutality among the

mob, licentiousness among their youth, indecency at the public games—moral life turned into immorality!

“Do you see now wherein we differ from Christians? They recognize with us that human freedom must be subservient to morality; but they think they degrade their end if they take the only possible way of reaching it—they select the road of Reason, we take that of Feeling and of custom: there is the difference. They overlook the chasm between their knowledge and their acts, between what they believe and what they do: this is the canker-worm of the new faith, especially of the Protestants. It was Socrates’ old error, that it is only necessary to know what is virtuous to do it, that virtue can be taught, as it were; in short, in the tacit assumption that our deeds depend upon our volition alone, which is guided by our reason, you have the foundation of their much-praised freedom, I might almost say, unbridled license. It is for this reason the Heathens are ignorant of the harmonious symmetry of our life; the want of this harmony, of this peace, tortures them; they call happiness a dream, their whole life is a confused chase after a shadow, their senses, they find, can neither be killed nor satisfied. Their fearful lot it is to *know* good, to *do* evil. Man’s will, growing ever stronger, at mature age governs him entirely, if it has not been early taught to obey. And this blind giant ye seek to lead with syllogisms, with fine words? Of a truth, your humility is ridiculous *presumption* on the part of reason: your continual moans concerning your sinfulness are horrid blasphemy of the Creator; for how can he expect compassion who carelessly lays the natural means for improvement aside, and depends upon the mercy of the Supreme Judge? Do ye not feel that your practice contradicts your theory; that an enormous ill has arisen among you, such as neither Israel nor even Pagan Hellas and Rome ever knew? Deny, if ye dare, that hypocrisy poisons your whole lives, and that unfortunately it has become a necessity to you, so that if ye abandoned hypocrisy, your whole vaunted civilization would sink to ruins: your humanity rests upon it: each one endeavors to make his neighbor believe in his morality: every one proclaims the stringent command: it is the general password. Words! nothing but words! Yes, ye have a public morality, but no private: pretense rules the world of the nations, pure religion which in truth preserves, they do not know. Pretense

is mighty in the world and sweet to the vanity of our heart. Who will deny it? Great and small bow down to it, and he who says he is above it, prostrates himself to it before all others; the professor serves this god as well as the mechanic, and even while searching for Truth, the pretense, the appearance of Truth, suits them best, they are the marionettes which dance to public sentiment: it is only the ever-present idea of the Eternal, before whom no deceit can exist, that preserves us in the honest truth, and cleanses our hearts from this ever-penetrating, defiling dust!

"But let us stop for to-day, Samuel, you must be tired out."

"Nay, uncle, not if you were to speak the whole night. But you have not yet answered the Apostle's reproach."

"Was not the answer contained in my words? When Paul inveighs against the Torah that it makes men conscious of their sin, he finds fault exactly with its chief excellence, and reproaches it for wisely making use of human selfishness to that end, instead of attempting to destroy it. Of course it would have been more consistent to have torn it out root and branch, as he has done, I suppose. But if he only intends to say that this external law *may* lead to hypocrisy, I will willingly grant it: like every human device, it is not absolutely perfect."

"But still, uncle, must you not grant too that a free and self-governing morality stands higher than a mechanical species: that the Christian code then is of higher value than the Jewish?"

"You think from a Hellenic standpoint, and I from a Jewish, Samuel: in this way we shall never come to an agreement. But let us try. Tell me, Samuel, why do you not steal? Is it because it is forbidden by the law of the State?"

"I do not steal because I hold it to be wrong."

"Is that only your own personal conviction, or a generally accepted principle?"

"The latter of course."

"Then your States have a funny way of forbidding *what is a generally recognized prohibition*, and your thieves are more curious still, that they transgress it."

"But, uncle, it is because men's selfishness is mightier than their morality, that the State has to declare against theft: what would become of property if this prohibition did not exist? But it can



well leave the performance of moral duties to the conscience of each individual: first, because the community as a whole does not suffer by their non-performance: secondly, because it is impossible, nay, subversive of their very intention, to *enforce* their performance."

"I am not so sure that it is right thus to separate the individual from the communal weal: wherein else can the general welfare consist, if such exist at all, if not in the welfare of the individual?"

"Well, I must allow that, but lay all the more stress upon the fact that *enforced* morality is *no* morality."

"Then it is not moral to obey the laws of the State? Come, Samuel, why do you not answer?"

"If I say no, you will conclude that it is therefore immoral. But I think the laws have nothing to do with the free self-government of man, that is, with morality."

"Why, Samuel, you have made a discovery which you ought to impart to all tax-payers. And first of all, those good people would be thankful to you, of whose anonymous money-payments we read so often in the English papers as acknowledged by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The good simpletons are evidently conscience-stricken at having paid too little income-tax."

"I see my error, uncle. Yes, it is moral to conscientiously obey the laws of the land, not because they are commanded, but because we hold them to be right and necessary."

"And the pious man who acts up to the Torah's command, do you think he does it because he is so enjoined by a higher authority, or because he is conscious of its truth and necessity? The statutory law of the Indo-Germans and the moral idea, to the Hebrew, are both the inseparable word of the Eternal. Justice and morality to us are one, are God's command: but our neighbors tear them apart and set the latter at a premium. With us, he is a sinner who transgresses the State law, as well as he who omits a moral action: and who performs both, obeys both codes, does but his duty. The grand difference that I see herein is this: the Hebrew does what is right because he ought to: the Christian does it to acquire special merit: I suppose that is what is called Christian love!

"Let us now take an example of the working of the so-called ceremonial law and of your freedom, respectively. We are told it is our duty to help our needy fellow-man: whoever enjoys a superfluity



must assist his poorer brothers. Thus the Jewish beggar asks without any servile cringing: he gets his right, not a gift, and the benefactor can boast of his contribution as little as the tax-payer. Whether our mode of benevolence, or that of the Christians, is more in accordance with manly dignity and true charity, let every unprejudiced observer decide. Look, too, at the result upon Society. Christian charity, your free work of Christian love, is so inefficient that everywhere the State is compelled to force its subjects to charity, in order to ward off starvation at least from its poor and incapables. The great masses of the nations vegetate in the most abject poverty, and a fearful band of paupers increases in geometrical proportion in all your great cities. The Jews contribute to this poor-tax as well as their Christian neighbors, but they do not leave their own poor to the tender mercies of the charity officials. They find means to support their poor themselves, and instead of fostering poverty by scanty alms, stop up the source of want. We have no confirmed paupers like the Christians have. In addition to the congregations, innumerable charitable societies labor among us to support the widow, and educate the orphans to useful trades in the homes of respectable families, to tender loans to those who are tottering. In the smallest communities, where a few members have attained some little property, poor brethren experience their friendly succor. This is all the effect of what the pious priests rate as our subjection to a ceremonial law, and is somewhat different from the results of their own free charity, which wastes millions on Malays and New Zealanders in order to affix the label of Christianity upon them, and allows their brothers at their side to perish in bodily and mental misery."

"You are harsh, uncle!"

"Do not misunderstand me, Samuel. Far be it from me to cast a reproach upon my Christian brethren. I have only to do with actual facts. I wished to show you whither that unfortunate variance between justice and morality leads, and perhaps you can perceive now why we should retain the Mosaic law in opposition to the Roman.

"I have yet to point out to you a few other examples of discord in the Indo-Germans' conceptions of Nature, in their national idea, if you choose. Their social idea is *Inequality*. They hold that some classes are fashioned out of finer clay than others. In the castes of

the Hindoos, in the classes of Patricians and Plebeians, nobles and citizens, everywhere this same dividing gulf, recognized by the law, and where modern enlightenment has erased these differences from the statute-book, it has yet not been powerful enough to wipe them from the hearts and customs of the people. Where will you find such perfect social equality as in Israel? There is no difference of blood with us, even property is not powerful enough to separate, as long as Judah retains its equalizing Law. We are all alike children of Abraham. 'Even the unborn souls were present,' says the pretty Jewish legend, 'when the Lord gave the Torah on Sinai, that none could boast of preference.' And in the last degree, we are *all* equal sons of Adam.

"The nations' political idea is utility. Their laws have evidently arisen from the necessity of affording protection for person and property. When we announced morality to them as an inner necessity too, they could find no place for it in their old system, and as they did not wish, or were not able, to revolutionize that through this new principle, they preferred leaving it to option, under the name of Freedom. But the Hebrew legislator, instead of founding his constitution on force, and afterward finding some wretched accommodation for the foundling Morality, supports his law on that individual consciousness. In his plan, it is not the executive armed with the sword, as in the Indo-German States, that has to watch that each man outwardly obeys the law, or believes it forsooth, as in their church polity; our wise teacher lays the 'command absolute' in the heart of the people. No mere Necessity and Utility with their coarse attendant train, characterize our law; it rules without violence because it is recognized as the Truth, as Duty, and recognized through *conviction*!

"We saw before, the expression 'law' expresses but one aspect of our Torah, which is the inseparable unity of law and performance. Our national idea moral is just as complete in itself. *Tsedek* means justice as well as mercy; we can not divide the idea into parts. The same feeling which urges us to treat our fellow with justice, tells us at the same time, He is thy brother, a creature of *thy* Creator. This is love, awarding justice to the beloved object, justice which is governed by consideration. Joseph, says the Pseudo-gospel, did not wish to put Mary to public shame, 'for he was a *righteous* man:' here the word *tsedek* must be understood, as a *loving*

justice: she had deserved obloquy, at least in his opinion at the time. But the Apostle, just as he tore the Torah asunder into law and doctrine, and gave his countryman only the former as empty form, divided *tsedek* too into harsh, rigid justice, and unconditioned love. We Israelites, of course, were to be satisfied with the former, for he needed all the grace for his own theory.

“And behold, the very portion he despised, retributive justice, has struck and punished his handiwork. He rejected free popular law, and behold, his followers erected a tyrannical priesthood. Justice does not exist for the ‘Love enthusiast,’ and his ‘grace,’ robbed of its natural restraining power, transforms itself into its opposite. Christianity is now gradually awakening from its dream, that has lasted 1800 years, of frightful love. Woe to humanity, if they only now perceive the other side: as they once loved without justice, they will now be terribly just without love, and then, woe to the times that shall come!

“We need not wonder that the nations did not understand us. The Greeks and Romans, governed by sensuous artistic feelings, had no heart for ideas. That moral system of the apostles, shriveled down to unconditional love, certainly must have seemed impressive to them (from the natural propensity of men to value highest what they do not possess), standing as they did on the opposing ground of utter self-seeking. The Germans were wonderfully moved by the new principle: they were but the national doctrines of their relations on the banks of the Indus and Ganges. That man can move external things by means of mental operation, Belief namely, is an ancient principle of the Brahmans; centuries before the common reckoning, the principle of Christian, *i. e.*, self-sacrificing, Love had been the central point of a world-religion in India. ‘In order to redeem all breathing creatures,’ so runs the Buddhist doctrine, ‘the most glorious perfect One took all misery, care, and suffering upon Himself for millions of centuries: he opens the gates of salvation to mankind and conquers Death through Love (*Maitreya*).’ This Heathen principle of unconditional mercy and sacrifice for the neighbor, has undeniably proved itself in Asia an excellent means of civilization. I only wish that a few of our chatterers who always have the phrase in their mouths, would go to Thibet and see how its idea is to be carried into *practice*. The Europeans never tried it, and rightly too.



For it is not natural that a being should fulfill his existence as the aim of another life: each man is his own aim, each one must purchase truth for *himself*, must satisfy his *own* conscience: each man is free towards his God. In woman's nature, it is true, this principle of unquestioning devotion finds place, and hence the magic charm of the idea for all feminine souls; it is a sweet poison which infected you too, Samuel, once. Raise your head on high: the eternal God for whom you sighed, whom you did not understand, is not the whining merciful One, who does nothing but pardon, is nothing but love, and yet has condemned mankind to suffering and calamity on earth. No, thy God is the God of righteousness, who rewardeth each of His children according to his merit, punishing the iniquities of the fathers unto the third and fourth generations, and showing mercy unto the thousandth of those who love Him and keep His commandments: the God who, because He loves thee, shows thee no favor: who desires that thou shalt acquire thy virtue and thy strength through thine own labor and pain: the will of the Eternal be praised!

"But let us not digress. The nations who formed the new religion were Helleno-Romans, hence the church institutions are to be explained. They had no room for religion in their feelings; they assigned it a place in their intellect: the brain took the place of the heart, and herewith play was given to fanaticism, to dogmatic disputation and violence. For the very essence of intellect-truths is change, diversity; and perception, unlimited in capacity, is restricted in reality. Hence some authority had to be erected here which should dam the ceaselessly-tearing current of Reason, and so lend religion, or at least the Church, some degree of durability, that she might compel all future generations to accept the ideas of one period as the rule of thought for all time, the infallible, heresy-uprooting Church. But feeling is always true alike: thus our religion needed only a juristic authority, like that of the Synhedrion or the Babylonian colleges; we know nothing of inquisitions of faith *autos-da-fé*, and trials for witchcraft.

"You see now how it is that the caprice-directed Will seems to them the essence of morality, how the Scholastics wearied themselves to find the proofs for their doctrines, like Socrates and his followers for their moral principles? Their proofs *could* only be deceptive



formulas, fallacies: they had assumed as true the very thing they pretended to prove, nor could they do otherwise. For if Reason was to be the seat of religious sentiment (which by its very nature is not subject to reason), it had to submit without examination, had to receive what opposed Reason as the essence of Religion, saw Religion in absurdity, in mystery. Hence the nonsensical always prevailed in Christianity, and Protestantism in its youth suffered from this ailment. People may laugh as they will, but '*credo quia absurdum est*' is a logical conclusion in such a system.

"At the first start, the new Religion fulfilled its aim. It calmed men and gave them back the sweet innocence of the ante-Socratic age. At a high price, it is true: ancient culture was most unmercifully rooted out; the new man found comfort and reassurance in the immoral idea of Vicarious Atonement; the pretended death of his God, and the power of pardon usurped by the priests, were his supports. The men of the Middle Ages could be easy, they had no accusing conscience, at least as long as they had money; it was the time which Macbeth praises, when the ghosts of murdered persons rose no more. Whoever dared to doubt this system was persecuted like a wild beast, and slain as if by wild beasts. Men became reasoning animals without conscience. Homer makes his gods and goddesses burst into laughter when they surprise Ares and Aphrodite sinning: in the poetry of the Middle Ages we read how the hero prays to God in pious simplicity to grant him aid in his designs upon his friend's wife, and in the legends the patron saint affords his protégé every help in foul matters. This blissful system was destroyed by the *Renaissance* in the XIV. and XV. centuries, and by its result, the Reformation. Since then we have watched how the Protestants, split into a hundred sects, have sought recompense for insufficient Religion, as did their Hellenic models, in Science. The Catholics have retained a goodly portion of Heathen imperturbation, but acknowledge all the principle of grace. The empire of the law, say their wise men, was an open one in Israel, but the present one of grace, a secret one; truly, a *very* secret one. As far as the ocean rolls, the cry and the groaning of the oppressed rise to the Eternal, by reason of Christian violence. Their heart is hard as iron, and mercy they only know by name. Look at millions of our colored brothers enslaved and treated as no Shemite ever handled

his cattle: that is the empire of Grace. Look at the Red-skins, whom the backwoodsman shoots down without a scruple for having stolen some trifle: the land is cleared of them as if they were some wild animals, and the audacious, greedy race of degenerated Anglo-Saxons in America chase the natives with fraud and violence from their possessions. They do not even give them a place of refuge, and when the simple people send emissaries to the President, to beg for instruction as to how they too can become rich as well as the white man, the assembly bursts into peals of laughter: that is the empire of Grace.

“Behold what it has achieved on every foreign coast, where the European, escaped from his Helleno-Roman traditions, can reveal his true nature. Read the accounts of conscientious travelers, how the white man’s avaricious civilization has brought curse and death to the untainted children of nature. Read it, my heart sickens to think of it. In every one of our prayers, in the word ‘*Peace*’ we lay the secret longing of our souls at His feet: the Arian nations have another watchword, it is ‘*War*’! Our Bible sees in the rainbow a pledge of reconciliation, of pardon by the Eternal; while the Hellene Homer accepts it as thundering Jove’s signal of combat. Where the sword of the law does not hold them in check, the most selfish passions gain ascendancy over them, intractable violence impels them, and the empire of Grace appears then in its concomitants of murder, arson, licentiousness, and intoxication. I have read the accounts of the deeds of the French in Africa, and a soldier of the Foreigners’ Legion told me his experience. They robbed the Kabyles of their herds, the source of their livelihood, and boasted of their actions in heroic bulletins. Villages were stormed, old and young were slain, and that no trace might remain of these heroes’ visit, the pioneers of civilization set the plundered huts on fire. It makes me shudder yet when I think of the narrative told by an eye-witness, how a handsome girl had sought refuge from the soldiery beneath some matting: the tumult of conflict died away in the house, all was quiet, and only when the huge black clouds of smoke closed in a vast funeral pall over the devoted village, did he think of the secreted girl—too late!

“You ask whether we were any better when we formed a State? In the time of the first Temple, certainly not. But we did not persuade ourselves we had authority for our evil deeds. Spirited men were

never wanting who held up to kings and people the mirror of their wicked lives, lashed them with the scourge of truth, as no Grecian orator, not even a Demosthenes, would have dared. Lashed them, I must say, too much. For as their souls were filled with the purest conceptions of justice and love, the smallest deviation from the right path seemed to them a heavy crime. True, we have sinned and merited our punishment a thousandfold. We were not authorized to wrangle and quarrel like the Heathens, for we possessed the eternal Torah and were bound to follow only that code for mankind. But the Christian with his laws stands forsaken on the iron earth. Neither his book nor his traditional customs can give him any instruction. His book contains the religion of women, his customs the religion of despots. So he vacillates between mawkish sentimentality and barbarism, as soon as the claims of real life present themselves. It is not long since a mad cry for vengeance against the revolted Hindoos rang through the length and breadth of pious England, its world-overwhelming missionaries and Bible-societies notwithstanding.

“O Samuel, I have never been able to consider the religions of the nations among whom we live, without thanking God devoutly for having fashioned me a Jew. For the life of the true Hebrew has no beginning and no end. He enters upon existence, and the past great history of his nation furnishes him at once with all the true knowledge applicable to life. The holy forms and customs of our antiquity remind us that we are not children of a day, they connect our present with the hoary past, and make the existence of mankind as old as that of these monuments. Thus my existence reaches back into a wondrous distance, and all the great experience, all the wisdom of truth and morality purchased at the price of martyrs’ heart-blood, is now my property; *I* was redeemed from Egyptian bondage, *I* dwelt in booths in the wilderness; *I* celebrated the harvest feast in the holy land; and each recurring year the awful destruction of the well-built city is repeated, and I see the abode of the One God crumble beneath the flames. I wander from the land of my fathers among strange nations. I am hunted like an animal, but God’s hand sustains me: they cut off all means of subsistence, but His hand gives me food. Thus my parents have handed down the sacred possession to me, and how should I depart from their way, if I daily think of the Eternal, and the fate of my people who tread so vividly before my eyes



on those holy and beautiful holidays? Of a surety, only thus can I live a true, a beautiful life. It is the inheritance, too, I have to pass on to my children. This command of the Lord is of more account to me than any tender feeling of my human nature; look here——” and the old man rose with great emotion, and with trembling hand removed the curtain from the portrait of his eldest son:

“Look here: do you know what it is to lose a child, a first-born child: to see him who should have been the support of your old age turn against you? You have no children. He lives, Samuel, he is living, but no more shall he see his father's face: he has gone, and serves now his idols, the idols of pleasure and society. On the day when my eyes shall grow dark and they bear me forth that I be gathered to my fathers, I shall think of this child too, but may the retributive hand of the Almighty descend upon him; and as he hath brought shame on the head of his father, may his children disgrace his gray hairs; and for that he hath proved false to the highest virtue of his people, fidelity, may mental torture be his inseparable comrade until the hour of his death—unless he repent. See, Samuel, we are erring mortals, far from following our Torah always and stringently: we are a stiff necked people, presumptuous and arbitrary in prosperity. But we possess one virtue which may be reckoned to us in justice, WE ARE FAITHFUL!”

“Oh, have mercy on your son!” I cried with tear-filled eyes: “banish not my brother from your heart! Does not God esteem his children equally, whether Jew or Christian? Is this fanaticism, worthy of former ages, becoming in you? Can a truth be a truth which infringes all the laws of morality? On the contrary, is not morality the touchstone of religion? But here you banish your own child from you because perhaps he is otherwise convinced, you who as a Hebrew are bound before all others to respect the opinions of others!”

The Rabbi did not answer a word. After pacing the room with great strides, he stopped in front of me, and laying his hand upon my shoulder, gazed with his large dark eyes directly into mine.

“Has the lion his sharp teeth to feed on grass,” he said in a deep and impressive voice; “has the sheep teeth to crush bones? The Eternal has appointed to each one his sphere of action, and animals have not reason enough to deviate therefrom. He has inspired the



heart of the Jew with His holy fire ; the Unity of the Divine Majesty is the medium through which the Jewish child regards the world as he becomes conscious and comprehends it. The Eternal has created us to bear witness to His incomprehensible Being, and the child of dust must follow in trembling the path which God appoints for him. Did we offer ourselves to die, like those martyrs of the new faith, to die for His fame ? Of a truth, it is far more glorious to live than to die ! When the hypocritical Titus lay before the city with his iron host, and to strike terror into the defenders, daily crucified a hundred Jewish prisoners : when streams of blood flowed down Bethar's <sup>15</sup> walls, Judah did not falter ! Then too it was only our country that was at stake. But when they attacked our mission, when they attempted to convert us to their abomination, then men and women, boys and old men stood forth and offered their throats to the knife, their bodies to the flame ! What was such a sacrifice of momentary enthusiasm against the tyrannical oppression and its fiendish ingenuity which lasted their whole lifetime ? They were marked like cattle and degraded, forced to forget their manly dignity, and came at last almost to believe they were the despised abominations their hosts proclaimed them to be. One word could have saved them : *recantation*. *But that word would have been a lie !* The follower of the Torah is able to die—but *not to live in falsehood !* We are convinced that our national idea of an Eternal God is everlasting, that its bearers, our people, must be everlasting too ; only the dregs of our nation have the audacity to bear false witness against our God ; no, not audacity, but madness, for the feeling of the One, the righteous One God, is the comfort of our sorrows, the happiness of our enjoyment, the life of our life ! Apostasy is shame, is madness, is living death. We *must* follow Him, we have no choice : I must offer Him my deepest love, sacrifice my wife, my child, my all. All morality which impugns fidelity towards the Eternal becomes immoral *eo ipso*, and I must reject it all. Love for men must vanish as a dream, be unsubstantial as a cloud, in contrast with the lofty and watchful, the merciful, compassionate God, who hath supported me from my childhood's years, who is with me in waking hours, with me when I dream ; the God whose peace o'ershadows my whole life, and concerning the perception of whom I shall once be able to say, 'I have not lived in vain !'

"You say that is fanaticism: let it be such to believe a truth and retain that belief. I know the modern world has become wiser, and is able to show justice, to favor, both parties: but allow us old-fashioned ones to retain our old ideas. We know that whoever has lied against God, has incurred His curse. He has transgressed the true law, he will not then respect moral obligations, for he is like an infuriated bull who, leaving the accustomed pasture, dashes forward in mad violence. He who sacrifices eternal truth to earthly gain, is the slave of his passions, and they will shatter him sooner or later. Do you think there is no more sincerity in the world because men have made their tongues so smooth and their backs so pliant? Of a surety, the Righteous Judge lives yet, and if ye are so silly as to prefer the glittering misery of hypocrisy to the unpretentious happiness of truthfulness and narrow circumstances, in your hearts ye can not affect such disguise, and the renegade must bear the punishment of his crime *in him on earth!*"

"*Judge not lest ye be judged!*" I cried. "Uncle, think of the words: 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone!'" <sup>16</sup>

The Rabbi shook his head slowly. "You too take that for a sublime thought? I liken it to a glittering thread which breaks if you attempt to hold by it. '*Vengeance is mine!*' saith the Lord: and far be it from me to call down misfortune upon the head of any man. But the son of Mary, according to this manifestly apocryphal narrative—for how should he, a Jewish Rabbi, not have known the Mosaic law?—Mary's son, I say, confuses personal opinion and law. Before God we are all sinners, and wicked he who condemns his neighbor. But he who has to give a verdict according to the law—and this that man had evidently to do—must govern himself by the letter of the same: the adulteress deserved death, and a poor judge is he who out of personal softness of heart, dares to set the convicted culprit free. When there shall be no more chaste husbands and wives, then and not till then, will that saying gain value, and then men will be just fit to be called animals. Thus, then, I am judge in my own house, and just as I have dared to devote my life to the Eternal, so too I have the courage to banish the apostate, that he may be left to his own course, in order that the misfortune that attaches to his footstep may not bring down misery upon my house and my innocent children."

As the Rabbi, speaking thus, drew down the curtain over his

son's portrait with a firm hand, flames seemed to shoot through my head like lightning flashes, and my heart beat responsively with joy. Yes, he had not spoken in vain. My past and my future lay spread clear before me, and I said softly to myself again and again:—"The Eternal is just and His goodness without end! Praised be the Lord who hath led me into my ancestors' house." O my father, now I feel cheerful and gay, now I know what I have to do, what I have to hope for. Mourn not that I reject the name of Christian; rejoice rather with me that I am saved!

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## LETTER XVII.

FEBRUARY 16TH, 185-.

You appeal especially to my prudence, you say, and warn me, that in this country, it is a despised nickname which I am writing on my forehead, a soiled garment I am donning; that I shall pity my children, for I have rendered the road to honorable distinction difficult to them, and have given them as an inheritance the bitter consciousness of being outcasts. Not to me this reproof; address it to the Christians! For the Lord's thunder has vibrated in my heart, and I return with joy and tears to His altar, to His people, to my brothers! Do you forget that I am a Jew? 'Yes, I am a Jew, and I thank God for it! Herein at least let me be like my great teachers: all the strangers' wisdom, all the splendor of their lives, does not satisfy me, but has only awakened a deep slumbering affection for my people. Need I repeat to you that our degradation is a disgrace *to the nations*? There is no country in Europe but has reeked with the blood of slaughtered Hebrews, who as guests at least should have been treated with forbearance. But unfortunately the existence of our nation did not fall in with your clergy's plans: therefore they swore our destruction. When their scheme of bodily annihilation failed, then they tried to murder us mentally; they devised for



us a code of violence and injustice, and called it "*Jew-law*." 'Tis true, Moses had commanded, "One law shall ye have: for the stranger as for the native;" but how mercifully did your Christian liberality act in revoking the rigid Mosaic statute! Book and pulpit preached hatred against the guiltless; they were pointed out to your tender youth as the type of all that was evil, and ye could not repress a shudder, forsooth, when ye heard the very name of *Jew*!

Yes, it is fate: you must either hate us or love us. God grant that the period of hatred has lasted long enough! Ye had to put away your idolatry from you, but your old aversion and prejudice remained. 'Tis useful to you, ye think; but think ye not ye will have to atone for the sins of your fathers? We claim no more than justice, we live and die for justice. Oh! I do not speak of the kind people of England or of France, who feel for the homeless and honor our fidelity. But the people here have a narrow heart, and their grandiloquent words but badly conceal their dishonest deeds. Not that I care much that they exclude Jews from office, while they take care to make them bear all the burdens of the State; but that they do this out of hatred and jealousy, instead of from political or religious reasons: that makes me blush for my Christian fellow-citizens. We can do without their offices and dignities; we do not want the painful servitude they call office, and consider ourselves too good to revolve ceaselessly without independent action, like wheels in a machine. Trade and manufactures allow us to remain free men, and to retain our working power with utility to ourselves. No, we are not angry that they reserve for themselves the unpleasant responsibility of officials; but why is the name of Jew *a reproach in this country*? The more amiably we approach them, the deeper does the sting of contempt pierce us. Let me help bear the suffering that weighs down my people, let me share the indignity that grieves so many noble hearts. Yes! I will pay for my happiness! It is a small price to give, merely to *appear* to be the opposite! Let me surrender the glitter and glare of existence: I will not mourn that my children too must share this sacrifice: for I have probed the life of the nations and know that it is hollow and empty, a vain and riotous turmoil. I will seat myself in the circle of the just who have maintained their faith, their fidelity, a thousand years; I will walk in the ways of the Righteous Judge, for your Kingdom of Grace is



nothing but a gigantic lie. Oh! now no more do I yearn for forgetfulness! Every step I have taken is clear to me; I recognize my errors and slips as helps towards the great goal: wondrously hath the Eternal led me! I acknowledge Him and believe in Him, and all the farrago with which I obscured my heart and mind has vanished before this truth. We alone are able to know and to believe together; while ye unfortunate ones must choose the one or the other, Knowledge or Faith; we harmonize both! And so, my father, remind me no more of prudence: I can not listen to its dictates; exhort me not with doctrines I have long despised, with your dogmas that made me unhappy. I love and honor you as ever, but as to what I must do, I have no choice. I am a Jew, and will be a thorough Jew; let others laugh if I be happy!

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## LETTER XVIII.

FEBRUARY 23D, 185—.

You are angry with me, father, that I could so misunderstand you: you love the *man* in me, and not the Christian or the Jew, and you are so anxious, out of fear of losing me, that with emotion I must confess to myself: 'With one man at least unconditioned Love is a reality.' Then let me still remain your son, as in my heart I always shall be, my dear Preserver and Instructor: I hope you will not regret it; England, that I had resigned with a heavy heart, shall remain my country. You have comforted me, have removed my only cause for apprehension—let me kiss your hand in gratitude: *you* remain to me, and my happiness is unclouded.

You beseech me to come back soon, the old house is so lonely; I am coming soon to the dear old Hall, and perhaps—not *alone*. You are delighted with our conversations here, and would like to come over yourself and shiver a lance with the Deist Rabbi. Well—the Bard

of the Psalms, and our incomparable Isaiah, what were they but Deists? Yes, and another certain person whom you specially honor, was he not a Jewish Deist? But let me continue my account of what I am learning from our Rabbi.

Alas! my father, the longer I live in this house the more I feel that we moderns curiously misuse the Word. Are we nothing but intellect, are we nothing but emotion? Alas! over the mightiest portion of our being the Word has not the least influence, and yet we insist upon training ourselves by means of words. Whither shall we flee from the eternal sermons of our ministers, from the exhortations of our teachers? As if we can make of ourselves what we choose: as if we only need to *wish* to be something, and lo! we are! Talk! thou art the God of this age: believe no one: we are liars all. Accept always the opposite of what you are assured, and you will be right. Yes, they know themselves, and therefore they say what they would like to be; what they are, they conceal. What shall become of us if the breach between word and deed, between head and heart, grow wider? This life is not worth the trouble of living, I tremble for the future: for offended Nature will avenge herself fearfully. It is not my business to point out the signs to him who does not see them; but now I can understand how Carlyle could flee from this corrupted world into the mysterious night of the Middle Ages: He found sincerity at least, if no truth: contentment, though no peace. When I was a youth, I used to enter a Catholic church as respectfully as a Protestant one. Now that I have seen Rome and Paris, I pity the Catholics, and restrain my foot from the houses where their priests rule. And the Protestants? Why are their clergy so restless, and their people so indifferent? Of course the Age is at fault, and its whelp, Natural Science. Yes, the Devil has corrupted Nature, and Science is his Kingdom. Rate me a fool if these Pietists must not necessarily come to this conclusion—more fearful, you say—more fearful than what? Hush, that is just what they are coming to, yes, this Institution is weak, very weak, with the infirmity of old age. Luther lived before Moses' time—nay, not so, he died before Abraham!—but I forget I was going to talk about our household.

How joyous is the Sabbath day in Israel, my father! 'Tis true, we in England sanctify our Sunday under this name, but it is at best a most uncomfortable day with us, and without the police, you know

how holy it would be. Have you ever noticed the crowds that surround the tap-room doors of a Sunday evening, waiting for them to open? But where it is necessary to have police for our working-classes, for the Jew-peddler his conscience is sufficient. Friday afternoon, before the sun sets, he closes his business; he goes home, washes, dons holiday apparel and hastens to the Synagogue. I do the same; the pious hymns elevate my spirit, and joyfully do I greet the day that gives me a foretaste of perfect peace.

Are the Jews alone licensed to be men? We others are continually dragging the barrow of our needs. The Greek sages taught the draught-ox is happier the less load he has to pull; our political economists prove the contrary. Both are right, according as each one believes. Yet we all must trudge along in the yoke, the yoke of toil and pain. It makes one happy for the time to look back and see so many venerable men in the history of past generations, who set their chief happiness in the weal of their fellow-men. And how many such are lost to history; only those who were distinguished, even if only in their death, do we remember. Before all others, thou, O great Sakyamuni,<sup>17</sup> wert the first to alleviate human misery! Born a royal prince, the lower castes gazed up to thee in abject submission. If any princes were so legitimately, surely these Indian ones were! Necessity made them lords by their birth, made the people, too, laborers and slaves. Who taught thee, great Sakya, that while a youth, thou shouldst cut off thy hair, the sign of thy vigor, shouldst give thy substance to the poor, and clad in the beggar's garb, holding the beggar's shell in the hand, shouldst mingle with the lowly and the outcast to teach them, to elevate them? Yes, thou didst show thy love for mankind; and not men alone, but all earthly beings didst thou surround with equal affection. He must have been a rare master indeed who dismissed his disciples into the world with the charge—"conceal your virtues, reveal your faults!"<sup>18</sup> At the summit of his doctrine he places the word without which no man can conquer life: RESIGNATION! Thus didst thou seek to relieve us of the pains of existence, from the torture of regeneration. How long do such spiritual helps endure? Long since hast thou been deified: thine images, thy bones, thy teeth have worked miracles innumerable. The teachers with the soft hearts understand us not, and we do not comprehend them. Their doctrine is fitting for them



alone, not for humanity, which wanders along its old road of disquiet and anxiety, and makes its redeemers gods, in order to be rid of them!

Like the Indian prince, the Jewish Rabbi's heart bleeds for his fellow-men's sufferings; he too preaches a lofty, superhuman morality: he too, despairing of this earthly world, seeks consolation in a happy life after death.

Mankind in its juvenescence is like a young man. It loves to luxuriate in visions, and prefers its own dream to reality. But having attained mature age, such airy food no longer satisfies. We know we have to live out this life of ours. Resignation and an uncertain Futurity are but poor recompense for the reality we feel, the reality we would wish to enjoy; and Religion's rôle of giving some shape to life is over: it can not do it. And so the Hindoos fell from their spiritualism back unto their former sensuality. And we? *We never left it*: we Christians pay a certain caste to live according to religious principles, or to pretend to do so, and we are rid of all such obligation: the vast majority live on in the old Heathenism. In spite of our police, what is more common than a murder? Or a suicide, that symptom of ailing humanity? You can not take up a paper without reading of one or the other. Where public morality breaks out into such ulcers, private morals must be corrupt indeed. Oh, yes, we pass compliments with hatred in our hearts: we swear love, and have a whole dictionary of phrases and propositions at hand to justify our lust: we study long and deeply that men may admire and give us titles! Out upon this world of falsehood and talk, of whitewashed misery! In Heathen antiquity, men moderated their desires for fear of Nemesis: even the sun would not go unpunished were he to exceed his limit: thus spake the obscure Sage. In later times, the selfish priest was the only restraint upon unbridled excess. He used to think for mankind, and he it was used to draw up passports for eternity. No wonder that the half of all land property passed into the possession of the Church! What will men not offer for freedom? But, O God, what a freedom! Freedom to lift up his hand in rage and malice against his neighbor; freedom to wallow in blood and lust. The eternal principle of humanity, fearful justice, had disappeared from the world, and the Almighty Priest gave privilege to all who



could purchase it, as he stood there at the gates of Hell and Heaven, binding and liberating! To this very day in Mexico you may see the people crouch to the dust as a priest goes by, and watch them clutch to kiss this divinity's robe, while he stalks on in haughty indifference. Your ancestors too bent the knee thus, emperors and kings have lain in the dust before the clerical tyrant; only ONE has stood upright, only ONE paid not the adoration due to Eternal God, to a mortal son of error and frailty! You know the story of Mordecai who stood at the palace gate and would not bend the knee to the haughty minister? Yes, my father, it was the JEW! The down-trodden slave alone retained his manly dignity! The mighty lords who trampled him, the learned magistrates who drove him from the courts, *they* laid their necks, though perhaps only after a fearful struggle, laid their necks, I say, at last under the heel of their priestly despot; but that "outcast of humanity" stood there with head erect, and if only the choice was left him, Falsehood or Death, forthwith he covered his face and spoke: "*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the One!*" O my father, do you at least be just towards this people; I do not care for other Christians' opinions; men's fancies have never altered the real state of things, and I know only experience can teach correctly. But do you not be unjust towards Israel, and do not seek in that frightful phantom "Christian Love," for a reason to refuse justice. Yes, that frightful phantom! That was the festering wound I bore in me, and therefore I could not be healed! If such were the eternal law of humanity, I too would have had nothing left but to despair and die! For the contradiction between this supposed intention of God and the real world as it is, was a canker in my heart and left me no peace!

So we floated over the surface of the swamps of the Middle Ages, knowing that no priest could pretend to assume responsibility for our actions, knowing that we ourselves must pay, must account for all our deeds. But of what utility is this knowledge to us: we can not apply it, we have not even time enough to acquire a conscience; all our leisure is taken up by the part we have to play in each other's presence; to what end plague ourselves about reality, when Appearance, Pretense, is all that is demanded? Thus have we become wiser than the slaves of the priests, but at the same time

more miserable: we are free, but this liberty does not bring us happiness. Why is our mouth forever prating about morality, morality? Because we know our neighbor's morality would be advantageous to us; we wish to lead him to what we avoid ourselves. "What a holy world that must have been!" our posterity will say when they judge us by our books. "What strict morality!" Lies and falsehoods! Our fellows worship vulgar selfishness in secret; what brings them profit is right, their neighbor's welfare is a matter of indifference to them. They let their brothers starve on their doorsteps, while they, with upturned eyes, sing bigoted hymns; they trample on the orphan and the widow, and their greed leaves them no repose! Yes, their boasted morality is an empty word. God be thanked, I know now that it is a lie, not only in practice, but in theory too; no more do I accuse God, no more lament for humanity; I have learned to hope, I have found peace! It is even thus restless man seeks his fortune abroad. He crosses the broad ocean to distant lands, grubs there greedily for gold, or gathers up treasures on desert coasts; but nowhere does he find contentment. I too sought wisdom among all nations and found her not. At last the Lord opened my eyes, and lo! she lay before me, quite near to me. She was my inheritance from my fathers, I needed only to take her by the hand and she was mine. I was blind, but now I can see: let me enjoy my untold fortune quietly. For the first time in my life, I AM HAPPY!

## LETTER XIX.

MARCH 1ST, 185—.

I WAS sitting in my room, and the Hebrew poets of the Middle Ages were lying open upon the table before me. I had read till my eyes had grown blurred, till my tears blinded me and fell tremulously upon the yellow pages. "Among all peoples," mourns the poet; "among all peoples, I alone go backwards; it seems appointed I shall never see Liberty more. Thou hast driven me from Thee with both hands, and while Thy left hand warned me to depart, Thy right hand called me not back again. Am I iron? Is my flesh of steel that I should bear this suffering? For almost a thousand years have I been desolated, orphaned, forsaken, captive; harrowed like a plowed field, torn up as a garden, covered with shame!"

My heart swelled full with woe, and I hid my face in my hands. I looked back and saw the ground covered with traps to snare the poor sufferers. Wolves with their sharp teeth and powerful jaws can be exterminated, wherefore not these weak ones, these peaceful hermits among the millions? The priests had announced that the time of salvation had come: this peculiar people, who mock this salvation, must perish from the earth they disgrace. In their own land a people of shepherds and farmers, despising the lust of gain, they shall possess their mother earth in their dishonored graves! No profession was allowed these strangers, no school was open to them; what remained of them should sink to the level of a gypsy band. But the voice of the Eternal cried:—"Live, live on!" And they became rich, their sons walked in the ways of the Torah, their daughters in purity; and they brought prosperity to the towns where they were allowed to settle; but in proportion envy and hatred grew too! A fanatic priest rises and preaches against the "enemies of Christ." A corpse has been found near the Jew-quarter; what a capital opportunity for the ruffians of the town! Let him who will be rid of his debt to the Jews in an easy way: him who lusts for

booty, for blood, and before all, let the pious who wish to earn undisputed entrance into Heaven—let them all join that dark crowd that pours with death-boding shouts towards the Jewish Ghetto.

The fathers of the city are in the Town-hall at their meeting. Who is it that bursts into the room, throws himself at their feet in despair? It is the messenger of the Jews who beg for protection! "Fool, what avail thy words? Say quickly: pronounce the magic word: *how much do ye offer? How many thousand marks can ye give?* Then perhaps our Christian soldiers shall march to your assistance!" Hark! hark! Too late, too late! The dull boom of the fire-bell rings over the town, a thick black cloud mounts to Heaven! The lords shrug their shoulders and look at each other. "Well," says the Burgomaster, "at all events, the money goes to the people; the Jews' legacy falls to the town!"

And yonder where a raving mob of savages rushes into the peaceful dwellings! "Ha, the coward race has hid! Come forth, ye Jews!" *Coward!* 'Tis true, ye long since have forbidden them to carry arms and armor; true, ye have sought by blows and mockery to rob them of every spark of manly courage; but ye, good Christians all, bear good swords and halberts to boot! Ay, and they do not forget their piety too; besides the sword in the right hand, the left holds aloft the crucifix, *the crucifix with its dying Jew!* "*Who worships Him, is saved!*" Now, who will kneel to the idol, who is *coward* enough, in fear of death, to deny God? Bah, what is death? Child's play!

See yonder house, against which the maddened crowd dashes in vain! It is the school! The Rabbi, as soon as he heard the uproar, barricaded the door, for the hope, the consolation of the community is in his hands, the people's children! At the turret-window he lingers, looking for help—in vain! Ever stronger resound the threatening blows against the trembling timbers of the door. It is time. He descends and approaches the children, who in terror have closed their prayer-books and huddle together like sheep when they scent the beast of prey. What does the Rabbi hold in his hand? It is something long and black, made of leather—why do his eyes flash so strangely, and why is there a deathlike silence in the crowded room? All the more piercing is heard the cry of a mother in the next house from whom the butchers have torn her child



to dedicate him to St. Peter or St. Paul! All the firmer becomes the Rabbi's resolution. "Children," he cries, "will ye die for the Holy One, blessed be He, or will ye become *Goyim* (Christians) and serve images?" "We will die!" shout the pale children. And he draws the sharp knife from the black case, the knife wherewith the oxen are slaughtered for food, and they draw near, these youthful heroes, and he slays them one by one! Is this a fable? It *can* not be true! Alas! *how* true! Fearful, awe-inspiring, divine Rabbi—they have broken open the door at last, they will seize thee, Rabbi, pour burning pitch upon thy self-inflicted wounds, they will flay thee alive; but he who thus laid his hand upon the children in his charge, has done more than Abraham, suffered more than he who was deified for his crucifixion!

Rising from my chair, I strode up and down the room, thanking God, and I said: The Lord be praised, and may His favor rest on those who have preserved this Law for me! I wandered around in the land like a stranger whose language no one understood, I stumbled like one intoxicated, and my eyes were full of tears. For I had drunk the nations' cup of confusion<sup>19</sup> from my youth, and forgotten the inheritance of my blood. Yes, Thou art a fearful God, who chastisest our sins; Thou requitest us according to our merit that we may stand before Thee! But Thou wilt remember, Lord, our sufferings and the torture of our fathers, as Thou hast promised, and account them as righteousness to us sons of the dust. For what is suffering before Thee, and what joy? What is pain and what bliss? In vain do they ascribe human failings to the Supreme! In Thy mercy didst Thou give us punishment, and pain as a boon: Thou ledest us, not with the mother's blind tenderness, but with the love of a father, who chastises in order to improve!

Yes, I had drunk of the nations' cup: my education and the poets had caused those poisonous ideas to blossom the germs of which are contained in every human heart; those ideas, so sweet at first, so bitter afterwards; so brilliant while retained within ourselves, so hollow and so empty when they enter stern reality.

I regarded the better class among my youthful comrades who had not sunk into the grave of routine, and I found that they all were chasing secret shadows in their hearts. One glowed in youthful ardor for a noble wife, and his life revolved around the focus of two

bright eyes. If she were to forsake him, he thinks he should despair of life, and yet when he gains her, he feels that a handsome wife does not satisfy all his longing, and like many of the children of the nations, he will look back sorrowfully to the sweet dreams of his youth. And I, considering these things, laughed bitterly in my heart, and said:—"All is vanity!" Then I saw my brethren, and I found many noble ones among them who regarded not themselves, but the suffering of their fellow-men pierced their eyes like sharp arrows, and through the tears which obscured their gaze, the misery of mankind appeared in indistinct, magnified proportions. The words of the Nazarene left them no peace, and, noble fools! they sought to alter the natural laws of life! I remarked that these philanthropists would make the earth a huge and awful wilderness, for when they came to deeds, the heralds of those overstrained moral ideas began to rage with fire and sword, and I laughed bitterly in my heart and said, "All is vanity!" The more I saw, the heavier became my heart. And I found your lofty minds, feeding on their own despair, till the poison slew them or burned their brains: your Kleist, your Byron, your Lenau—who will count your unknown comrades in fate? And the mighty man who placed his heel on the monster's throat, your Goethe, he succeeded only by descending alive to the shades of Hades; in this world there is no place for men. For the disquiet sent by the Eternal hath penetrated the marrow of this age, and among the noisy, busy cry of the mart, an obscure tone of lamentation is heard, full of woe and endless grief. Then I became sad—for I was a Christian. I approached those of my brethren whom I saw flourishing and enjoying life, and said: Teach me your secret. But they smiled and said: Time enough, you will become wise, only watch. Then I saw that they toiled for their senses, for their vanity, and by a mere instinct, for their offspring. But they laughed thereby and were merry, for they enjoyed themselves, their words said one thing, their deeds another. Profit was the demon they served in their hearts, their fellow-men's rights were the God whom they pretended to worship. That is the way of the world, they said; we did not make it, but we must submit to it. So I became a mocker of truth and virtue, and I laughed at the childish visionaries; I saw facts naked as they were, and God's universe appeared to me a wretched patchwork. Scorn dwelt upon my lip

and bitterness in my heart, and I said, All is vanity. To what end is useless virtue? Let us enjoy, at least let us enjoy! Wearied of the senses and their deception, I paid allegiance to irrationality, determined as her champion to gain assurance. *But the conversionist became converted.* I need now only hear the truth to recognize what I so long have sought.

My thanks, O Lord, who hast led me through the arduous, bitter road of pain to this knowledge. Thou didst give me contentment and confidence, and me who, like the strangers, sought support in the past, didst Thou cause to work for a lofty future. Yes, Thou art a merciful God, who causest the good of the fathers to be felt until the thousandth generation. And with heartfelt gratitude do I honor the memory of those martyrs who shed their blood for Thy name, that posterity in after-years should derive new strength from Thy Laws, and new support!

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## LETTER XX.

MARCH 7TH, 185--.

WHEN I returned on the Sabbath morning with my uncle from Synagogue, and we entered the festively-decked sitting-room, there were flowers on the window-sill and clean white cloths on the tables and sideboards. The industrious Rachel, whom we only see of an evening or at meal-times, was sitting to-day comfortably in her chair; her handsome figure, always modestly clad, was encompassed by a dark silk dress, her abundant hair was artistically arranged. A joyful sensation entered my breast, and I said, "Uncle, how happy are those who dare to fulfill the holy law without caring for the consideration of the world; to seek peace in the Eternal. I have too deeply felt the anguish of a struggle whose results leave the heart empty, that I should not experience the wish to see others live like



men. Is it not our duty to bring this law to the nations, and so redeem them from dissension and disquiet ? ”

The Rabbi sat down on the chair from which his daughter had respectfully risen, and said, “ You may remain, Rachel, we have nothing to talk about you may not hear.” And taking off his hat and putting on his velvet cap, he turned to me and continued : “ Remember, my son, that we already once made the trial, eighteen hundred years ago. Did not disciples of that man announce our law to the Heathens around ? Who was it preached to the Romans ? A Jew. Who to the Greeks ? A Jew. He who was made a god, was a Jew ; his mother, the goddess, was a Jewess ! What was the result, my son ? I do not allude to the death of the originator : he who undertakes a grand cause must be prepared to die for it. But what was the result for our people ? Our history, our very garb, which should have recalled their Saviour and their Apostles—but the Sabbath is not the day for feelings of bitterness, and God be thanked we have forgotten. But this warning we should deduce from the past, never to lend our hand to such revolutions. How long is it that we have been allowed to travel without a guard ; how long is it since we paid a poll-tax ? It was not only the Christian clergy who paid us evil for good, Mohammed did the same. We lived in peace among the Heathen Arabs, as among the Romans and Greeks : only when we commenced to teach them, they began to persecute us.

“ Do we hide ourselves from the Christians ; are not our schools open to every one ; do we not serve God without pomp, and unabashed before the eyes of every one ? We make no proselytes, we need no propaganda or missionaries. We entice no one. You know it is an old principle with us, to examine the candidate for admission to Judaism rigidly, only to accept him if his demand arise from true motives. Certainly I wish from my heart that all the nations should be humanized through the Torah, that the unity of mankind, which we maintain as the leading principle in our ideas and institutions, should become realized. But all my wishing will not make men out of boys. The best service that we can render the nations is to guard this Law pure and unsullied, and illustrate it in our mode of life, until the time shall come when their shoulders are strong enough to bear the holy burden with us. It may be a thousand, it may be ten thousand years : the time will come. They themselves are gradually destroy-



ing their hearts' images, and no one can spare them this self-torture."

"It is no torture, uncle, but a holy pleasure to destroy idols when we know they are idols!"

"No, Samuel; who loves to bury his dead? I speak of the idols which are generally called Ideals; read how the poets mourn their extinction."

"Do you wish then to banish all ideals from life? Do you not bring it down thus to common materialism? What then becomes of your supreme Idea of God? I can not understand: sometimes you seem to me a pure Idealist, and at others a gross Materialist!"

"Still the old way of thinking, Samuel!" he said. "Materialism and Idealism are empty conceptions without any real existence. Nature knows no spirit without matter, no matter without spirit. It is a delusion to separate them, and we shall not look on true Men until this breach has been repaired. As long as Idea or Spirit is held in opposition to Matter, like worldliness to spirituality, so long will men remain in misery. Do you understand now what I call Idols or *Idolæ*?"

"You remember the Indo-Germans have a different psychology to the Shemites. Our heart is like a convex lens, gathering all the sunbeams anew to a perfect image of the sun; but the heart of the nations is like a concave glass, scattering the rays of light, or like a cut stone, splitting one reality into a thousand images. These different, false images of the heart or emotion, I call *idolæ*, like Bacon designates deceptive concepts, *idolæ*; do you see now what torture it must be to destroy one's own heart?"

"I know it, alas! only too well!"

"And still you wish to go and tell them their ideals are only such delusive *idolæ* or images, and nevertheless grant yourself that the head can not teach the heart! No, let us leave it to Providence, my son, who leads us mortals by different roads to one goal. God desires we should learn from our errors, from our experience. Have patience: the idol's power is being put to the test, and as soon as they discover they have been adoring a fiction of their imagination, they will hurl it from its pedestal. Greeks and Romans did the same until their hearts were empty, and desolate, until they pined away, yearning for the Truth. This is, as it were, the demo-

cratic course of history : everything special, everything adapted only for small parties, passes away, fades after a short period of bloom, until the universal, satisfying both high and low, is discovered. Thus Art flourished but for a short period among the Hellenes. Another *idol* of theirs stood trial just as little: political independence. They attempted to devote their lives to this god ; as its priests, they deluged their land with blood ; but when they saw hatred spring from waste and desolation, they shattered this delusive god of freedom too. Dominion and Fame were the phantoms the Romans pursued in unremitting devotion. Fate crowned their perseverance, as it always does, with success. And when Rome called the whole inhabited earth her empire, when the wiry Siculæan and the heavy Copt sowed and harvested that the proud Roman might feast in luxury, the iron men of the old school, your Brutus and your Cato, had no resource but to curse their virtue and to die. At that very period when the world, like some drowning man, was gazing all around in wild despair, those noble men of our race stepped forward and cast a rope to the rescue. We watched what then became of the eternal idea among the Heathens : a new Heathenism ; unity split into plurality, the idea fossilized in sentences, war taken from the political field and incorporated in religion. Rome was too old to learn. The new disciple came from the forests of Germany, but he brought more idols with him, the old work had to be done over again. The gods of antiquity, of Hellas and Rome, were dead, that of the Germans assumed their place. Religious frenzy, honor, fame, supersensual sensual love, were the monstrous progeny of the Middle Ages, shattered eventually by the spirit of history : they gradually metamorphosed their most ardent devotees into their most ruthless enemies. Enthusiasm for the divine turned to human massacre in the Crusades ; honor and glory became the bondage of the people in feudal serfdom and knightly highway robbery ; the chivalrous love of the Troubadours grew to be bestial sensuality.

“Shocked at the sinfulness of the world, the Germans rose three hundred years ago and endeavored to return to pure Christianity, for this seemed the only hope left. So they commenced to reinstate their god of Love and Mercy with streams of blood worthy of brutal savages ; and when, weary of the work of murder, their swords dropped from their hands, the Bible was left for their religious con-

tests and bickerings. All better thinkers turned in disgust from the religion which could cause such horrors. These true philanthropists, these deists, pointed to morality as the essence of life. Originating in England, we have to thank the French and German propaganda for all the peace and true civilization that Europe enjoys. But their remedy was only palliative: the nations can not live without religion. And are the idols all shattered yet? Is religious fanaticism dead, or only asleep? Have all men turned their backs upon the mirage of bloody 'Fame?' Does not 'Honor' yet claim its victims in the duel? Has the lying worship of sensual love quite ceased from the world? Does not the idol of Christian love even yet impel its adorers to hatred and oppression?

"Until men have dashed down these images, until they become convinced that Truth *is* existent, and in its own good time will prevail by its own strength, without external violence; until they have courage enough to set their feet upon the head of that reptile-brood, they are not ripe for the eternal idea. I do not doubt these nations' sincerity and perseverance; they will attain what Greece and Rome failed to secure. The new road of scientific investigation they have pursued for the last few centuries is assurance enough to me that it will lead to the necessary negative result, to annihilation of the present idea. Therefore, my son, let us quietly and cautiously plod on in our own path. The Lord will protect His people for the sake of mankind, His people that is far from demanding dominion over other nations as reward for its services, that will be happy if once its brethren over the whole earth recognize that Israel has lived for them, in truth and humility. Let us hold aloof from the struggle in which we dare side with neither combatant; let us pursue with zeal the road of Science. Let us commiserate him who leaves our people and enters the service of the idols; he dooms himself and his posterity to despair, for universal despair is the beginning of the end for the nations!"

## LETTER XXI.

MARCH 15TH, 185-.

THE days are growing longer, and winter with its pleasant evenings is taking leave of us. Uncle Nathan, whose eyes are failing now, keeps us company more often; and Benjamin appears among us now and then. But I will not speak of him now: I want to describe our cozy evenings.

It is eight o'clock, uncle is sitting in the large arm-chair by the stove, and we are grouped around the table. Rachel delights in her official occupation as reader, for we generally devote an hour or so to hearing some sterling work read aloud: it raises us, as it were, above our every-day round of life. Benjamin sits drawing, an art for which he possesses some talent. Your correspondent occasionally indulges in a cigar, but generally is content with listening attentively to the fair reader. It sometimes occurs, however, that lingering on the music of her voice, he fails to discern the sense of the words, or, while watching the changing emotions, fear, pleasure, astonishment, depicted upon her sweet countenance, strives, more than is right, to catch her beautiful eyes which are, however, steadfastly riveted upon the senseless page. We usually read new works of travel; sometimes I have to translate an interesting article or some curious trial from the "Times," which I get regularly. When Rachel has finished a chapter, she pauses and looks at us, one after another; places her hands in her lap and waits to hear what we have to say. But we younger ones generally let uncle open the conversation, for he is able to give new life to the subject by deeper insight and adducing parallels from his own experience.

The reading has not yet commenced. The Rabbi is gazing at Rachel kneeling down before the stove, her cheeks slightly flushed with the heat; I take up the book, it is Barrow's "*Bible in Spain*."

"Thank goodness," I said, "we are at the third and last part of this book. I was almost afraid, the author with his eternal questions,



would turn round on his readers, as he does on his fellow-travelers, and cross-examine us. Why do we not read a good novel or a play sometimes? What do you say, Rachel?"

"For variety," she said, "I have no objection to a change, to please our restless Samuel. I prefer a book of travels."

"Why, O sedate Rachel?"

"Well, I will explain as best I can. You see, with novels and dramas, I have to go through a large amount of anxiety and uneasiness, and perhaps, after all, have to bury my hero and heroine. But with a work of travel, I know at the outset that the traveler got safe home again, and laughs at wild men and beasts as he sits in his warm chimney corner. And then he speaks of true events and real things, while in dramas I have to suffer agony from fictitious ones. What are these 'books for amusement' (*Unterhaltungsbücher*) but mental racks? Of course, I am a silly little goose, and before others, I would not own I do not understand those books!"

"What, you can not understand Shakespeare, Lessing, or Goethe? Come, Rachel, you do not expect me to believe that?"

"I know little of any of those poets, Samuel, and that little is painful to me. I can not help it. Reading them it seems as if I were present at an actual execution, and those 'books of amusement' torture me like a bad dream. When I read a novel, I feel as if the whole world were upside down. All that is ridiculous is in reason there, and what is natural is unusual. I do not know whether you follow my silly thoughts, but these book-heroes so thoroughly deserve their misfortunes, and bear unmerited suffering in so stupid a manner, that I get angry when I think that people take interest in such fools."

I was silent for a moment and thought, for I did not understand her indeed.

"Whoever does not know our Rachel well," said uncle, stroking the hair of the girl as she leant against his knee, "will think she speaks a foreign tongue. What will you do, my child, when you no more have me as an interpreter?"

"Father!" she said in a soft, plaintive voice, pressing his hand to her forehead and lips.

"Well," continued he, "I will translate Rachel's words into Samuel's language. The poet depicts man's struggle with Fate as with a powerful enemy. His aim is to glorify his hero; the fight is

always a righteous one, and even if vanquished, this hero receives a crown for his manly struggle. Fate is nothing but rude, brutal violence, possessing only the right of might. It was perhaps for this reason that Napoleon considered the 'Fate' or 'demon' of modern tragedy to be politics. My child does not understand the vicious violence of Nature combating virtuous mankind. She thinks that Fate is the will of the just God, before whom man is weak and vicious. Therefore the world of the poet seems to her topsy-turvy. She thinks that virtue rules, but there she sees vice in power; the death of an Antigone, of an Emilia Galotti, is an untold pain for her, and to the poor girl who has only learned self-denial and artlessness, the passion exhibited in novels and the emotion of the drama must be strange indeed."

"Do you speak in your own name, uncle, or in Rachel's?"

"In Rachel's."

"And did your father express your opinion?" I asked her.

"Yes, Samuel."

"Well then," I exclaimed laughing, "you are worse than Don Quixote's priest and barber together: they only burnt up the ridiculous books of chivalry, but in your hands our whole polite literature would not be safe."

"How can I condemn what I do not comprehend?" she said. "I have too little experience to give a verdict; I understand only my own nature. And, cousin, do people not say that goats can eat hemlock without injury? It may be thus with those books and other people; to me perhaps they would be so much poison."

"Foolish girl," I said in astonishment; "how does she come by such ideas, uncle?"

"I think this little head is large enough," he replied smiling, "to produce its own weeds."

"You certainly did not help me to them," she said, kissing her father's hand.

"Ha!" he exclaimed roguishly, "I see what you want; you know that Samuel loves to speak about poets, has read more books than you single letters, is what is called an æsthetic genius——"

"Was," I interrupted.

"So you want me to pacify him that he may not have a bad opinion of you."

"Yes, dear uncle," I said, "finish your exposition of Rachel's thoughts, give us something to think about to-morrow."

"Well, I'll try," he replied. "The poet represents the world as his feelings show it to him. The deeper and more fitting his emotions, the more truly will he reproduce the wondrous variety of things. This imitation of nature is the first, but not the highest qualification of the poet. The fearful reality of phenomena does not satisfy men's hearts, they long to discern the secret law, the everlasting, in what appears to be chance, to be fleeting. This is what they demand of the poet: he must strike the chord that vibrates most powerfully in the human breast, the connection of the earthly with the eternal, even if the sound be but a whisper. The Hebrew, who refers everything directly to the Ultimate Cause, can only have a lyric poetry; in the epic poem and the drama, which are the mirrors of human deeds, intermediate causes appear; in these, which in the depths of his soul he believes to be the play of blind chance, the Indo-German seeks to be deceived by illusion; it is a sweet consolation to him to find the Eternal Idea, even if only in the world of fiction, the idea which he misses in the world of reality. The poet's profession is to announce to him the better, the true world; but to do this he must himself be wiser than the common mob who, fettered from their birth to their grave to necessity and passion, experience only a sad unconscious longing for higher things. The most wonderful pictorial power and copiousness of true and deep emotions are not sufficient; men accord immortality only to that poet who can combine that which is derived from chance with that which is everlasting.

"It was therefore the ancients called the poet the seer; therefore Aristotle ranks poetry above history: hence, too, the fame of Homer in antiquity, of Dante in more modern times. Fame lays more stress upon this inner attribute, and will rank the poet higher for it than for mere external accomplishments; Goethe finds it in Spinoza, Schiller in Kant, and Shakespeare, whether he studied Montaigne or not, succeeded in connecting the sensuous with the supersensuous as no man ever did. When deep emotion is not coupled with deep perception, the poet remains blind, and is burnt by his own fire. But those geniuses who have united both qualifications in unusual measure, how did they arrive at the comprehension of the idea? Certainly not through study; in books you can only read what is



already known. They attained it through suffering and anguish, through experience; and experience predicates error. But it was impossible to impart this experience to their fellow-men without leading them over the same road they had traveled. Thus the works of a great poet are a conscious representation of his inner life, and it is the part of the intelligent reader, when moved, to seek out of the bitter fruit of raging passion, the sweet kernel of the poet's soul. Hence Art in some measure replaces the want of Religion, polite literature is the Bible of the refined classes, and there Art works towards the same end as their History: namely, to purify their hearts from passion by means of passion.

"We, who from our education in real life possess the Eternal Idea and its moral code, can not regard the strife, which seems to us needless, without pain. We possess its results already; we can scarcely place ourselves in the position of the combatants, because a Jew can not err as they erred. A Shylock's revenge is certainly not Jewish, nor is the ambition of a Macbeth, nor Hamlet's weak vacillation between the wish and the deed to fulfill it. The possibility of a Regan and Goneril is utterly incomprehensible to us. We admire the creations of that mighty and noble poet whose eyes the Eternal opened like those of his greatest prophets; for the vail of human perception did not cover his glance, he saw things as they are, and with iron stylus wrote down the way in which the Divine Spirit works in the life of the nations. We admire him as we admire the awful conquerer.

"If those monster passions are not ours, no more are the petty vices, the modern failings, of Shakespeare's successors; true, these are more dangerous, Gretchen is more hurtful than Lady Macbeth. This glorification of desires terrifies Rachel; she thinks it is not necessary to wade through three volumes of Wilhelm Meister's mistakes and trials, to reach the sober reality of life which we possess at the start. He who holds in his heart the pure idea that beautifies life and satisfies longing, which, though approaching the highest aim, never attains it, he, it is true, *can* do without polite literature. It is quite another question whether we, as citizens of these States, ought not to take part, though in our own fashion, in their mental life, their literature. I only recognize the highest class of intelligent poets, others are handsome wax figures which stare at you; I have nothing to say



to the scribblers. It is interesting now to examine how some have endeavored to replace the lack of the idea by the so-called ideal."

After this long speech the Rabbi cleared his throat; Rachel employed the pause in giving me a look, and pointing to her book that had long been lying open before her, with a glance of comic entreaty. I shrugged my shoulders, partly to tease her, partly because I really wished to hear the remainder of uncle's remarks; but Benjamin, who had watched our silent dialogue, exclaimed, "But, father, are we not going to read to-night? You know Samuel will monopolize you, he is so full of philosophy; but look at poor Rachel, she is dying to know what becomes of Judah Leib, and dares not say so."

"You are right, my son," replied my uncle, smiling. "I have spoken more than enough to-day. Now my daughter, we are listening."

He settled himself comfortably in his chair, and Rachel began with brightened face to recount the travels of the man of Jerusalem. When she reached the sentence, "His features were of a thoroughly masculine stamp, and though they belonged to a Jew, showed no trace of cunning," she stopped and looked at her father in astonishment. But he made no sign, saying quietly, "Read on, my child." So we accompanied the missionary on his voyage to Tangiers, which he made in the society of the Jew we have mentioned, and a younger one. We were all wonderfully interested in the narrative: I saw Benjamin, holding his idle pencil in his fingers, gazing on his sister with open mouth, as if he understood her better when looking at her. But her voice rang curiously, as if violently restrained at its usual pitch. Uncle Nathan, unobserved, had turned his chair so that his face was in the shade, and I myself felt a wondrous vibration in me. Yes, this was more than interest in a co-religionist, it was the spirit of common nationality, of common blood, that stirred in that circle.

But shall I let Rachel read farther? The Jews have sung their evening prayer on deck, and our missionary added a Jewish hymn. It grows cold, and the elder Jew, whom the author by reason of his long beard calls "the Sage," descends into the cabin; but scarce did he have time to lie down, when the old Genoese sailor, jumping down the three or four steps of the companion ladder, pulled him out by the heels. He then overwhelmed him with abuse, and threatened to kick him as he lay. "Do you think," he cried, "you, a dog and a

Jew, who pay like a dog and a Jew, are going to sleep in the cabin? Do not think it; nobody shall sleep here to-night, except this Christian gentleman." The sage answered not a word: he stood up and stroked his beard, while the Genoese continued his philippic. If the Jew had chosen, he could have strangled his assailant in a moment, or could have crushed him to death in his muscular arms, for I do not remember ever having seen a more powerful and muscular frame. But he was evidently slow to anger and patient: not a word of rage escaped him, and his features retained their usual expression of benevolent calmness.

Rachel read on further with steady constrained voice, and we heard how the poor man was dragged by his persecutor three times out of the cabin, and at last wounded. When she came to the morning scene, where the Missionary passes his brandy-flask among the crew, we heard how the old Jew, half frozen, waits with longing eyes for a draught of the animating liquor. His persecutor takes a long pull, and when the Jew gets it it is empty! The Genoese grins: "Beast," he said, "I saw from your looks you wanted a draught, and I said to myself, If I suffocate, I will not leave a drop of the Christian gentleman's brandy to be wasted on this Jew, upon whose head may blasting lightnings fall!"

Here the girl could no longer contain herself, the book fell from her hand, and she burst into tears.

"Foolish child," said the Rabbi, "was it a misfortune that the man got no brandy to drink?"

She looked at him with overflowing eyes. "O father, you know what makes me cry! What had the poor old man done to the sailor that he should so have ill-treated him?"

"Do not take things so to heart," replied my uncle; "you see the Genoese forgets himself only when he has been crossed, and you must not expect extra-polished manners from a seaman; they are accustomed to employ their fists instead of words. I do not imagine that he is so cruel out of religious hatred; that is only a pretext for his violence. How often do we read of sailors dying of ill-treatment, especially on American ships, and there it is Christian against Christian. Again you see the old man himself does not make much of the affair, although it is true he comes from Morocco, where the Jews are used to ill-treatment. That no actual harm is done him, we see

from the passive bearing of the Missionary, who otherwise would certainly have come to his aid, since he praises his amiability and mildness; and this is the author who can say nothing creditable of the Jews. And indeed, you must not forget that the sailor is in the right, and the Jew deserving punishment. He had taken a deck passage and had no claims on the cabin; it was very wrong in him obstinately to intrude where he had no right. His younger co-religionist, who keeps his place, gives rise to no disturbance. It is true the other was an old man, and out of compassion they might have let him lie on the cabin floor. But we are not told that he asked the Missionary for such permission; he takes it as a right, and that was his mistake."

But the Rabbi's logic did not please us young people, and we shook our heads.

"Then you are not convinced, children?" he said.

"As for me," replied Benjamin, "if I had been in the sage's place, I would soon have taught the Genoese blackguard manners!"

"Indeed!" rejoined my uncle, "then the other sailors would have overpowered him, and if they had thrown the Jew into the sea, who would have moved a finger afterwards? But his wife and children at home would have lost their bread-winner—*that* would have been sensible, would it not? How finely he would have revenged the insult! No, my son; if we can not love our neighbors, let us learn from the old man to subdue them by mildness and patience!"

## LETTER XXII.

MARCH 21ST, 185—.

WOULD you blame a man for settling in the country, building himself a trellised cottage, and toiling blithely from the rising sun to its setting, for his children, for the wife of his heart? *For the wife of his heart*: there it is! The beauteous eyes may shed a tear or two, tears of farewell; for how can you demand she shall relinquish the sweet privilege of being admired, beloved by all? What recompense can you offer her, young man, for the brilliant toilet, intoxicating music, the giddy dance? And if she herself wished to make this sacrifice, what magnanimous, nay, what wise man, would accept it?

Perhaps it is not the fault of that noble being, woman, that from being the friend and ally of man, she has at times sunk to be his amusement and his burden. Does she not possess a wondrous treasure of gentleness and patience, of industrious love and modest self-denial, which made our mothers so venerated? True, our ancestors were foolish enough not to hem the development of her fine sentiment, used to counteract, as early as possible, all frailty and vanity! How vastly have we improved hereon, we giants of the XIX. century! Not only flowers and fruit: no, feelings and temperaments too, we produce by artificial means.

It seems to me as if the essential part of man must remain concealed deep in him, like the root of the plant in the dark earth. There let the man's iron conviction repose, upon which he supports himself in his daily intercourse, and which enables him, when need presses, to execute unheard-of deeds; there too is buried the warm passion of the virgin, guarded like an enchanted treasure by a dragon, that in due time it may bless husband and children.

What wise Nature has laid in us for the proper support of existence, we often lavish for ornament, for pleasure. We lead the maiden's sweetest emotions, by means of poisonous novels, from her heart's



deepest recesses to her head; love-songs and novels fill her fancy with the world of sham, teach her to make actual perceptions out of obscure promptings, entice her to make herself the heroine of this ideal kingdom, to translate the world of thought into one of the senses.

The magic cord of holy womanly love, intended to embrace the family circle, is cut up for gewgaws for the young miss. She has shone in many a brilliant circle with these adornments, with her ready wit and languishing looks. Then she gave them to some coxcomb who treated them as flowers, wearing them in his button-hole awhile, then flinging them into the street when faded. But when the time of trial approaches and taps at her heart, whence our fathers saw pious gentleness and devotion flow, alas! there is no response now! It is *dead*. The girl has given away what belongs to her children to her empty admirers. To the enjoyment of duty done, which the world had in store for her, she preferred that of sensual pleasures.

What have we made of our women? We have given them all our failings and meannesses, their nature and their fate alike prohibit their appropriating our virtues.

You ask what they have done to me? Nothing: but can I help cordially despising those paper-flowers, now that I have found my own sweet rose? She is my darling, each word of hers is a charm, and I think of it for hours! Think? Nay, I repeat it over and over, and each time I see her glance again, see her whole womanliness before me, I strike the chord of recollection ever anew, and ever anew I hear the sweet, pure tones! Oh, now I commence to live again, a steady joy has entered my heart. O God, how lovely is this life which I despised, what bliss it is to live afresh in a beloved being! I almost shudder when I look back upon my past history—now I know what I am, to what end I am! Often I feel as if I could chide her! I could laugh at her, mock her, embrace her, and weep over her for very ecstasy! *For she loves me* and tries to hide it: I see it in her eyes, when not fixed on me; I hear it in her voice: it is a downright miracle to me—well then, let me enjoy my miracle in silence and in happiness. But that with her love for me in her heart, she should recognize her father's will as her supreme law, that almost maddens me; I can scarce restrain myself from demanding her hand from her father immediately, for—if I should lose her?

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Yes, I will become a man among men; I will leave all anxiety for the universe to Eternal Wisdom, and work in my narrow circle with love and confidence. Now I understand the poet's words: Let each one fashion himself to be a thorough instrumentalist, and let the *Maestro* of the Universe see to the harmony of the whole immense orchestra. Now I have my plan for the future, and I will do my duty like a man. Who knows the slave's wants better than he who has been a slave? Who the anguish of the prisoner better than the released captive? And thus we read in the Bible again and again:—"Be kind to the stranger, for strangers were ye in the Egyptians' land." This shall be my task: to open my brethren's eyes to their glorious inheritance: if I teach but one Jew, I shall have yet done enough, for such deeds never perish. What the world requires is in His province: He will supply it as He wills. How foolish was I, to weep and moan at the scourge I saw applied to His unruly children! I will perform my duty toward my fellow-men, help them charitably: that is our smaller Law; at the same time I will no more upbraid His great Law of the Universe, nor lament the fire that purifies the metal from the slag; for if ever any one has experienced how He assists in misery, that one was I!

I will work for my brothers, not attempting any great *rôle* in the world, but quietly paying posterity what I owe to our ancestors. I will be a schoolmaster in a small way, and if I save but a few mortals from the sufferings of Christian training, if I plant but a few shoots for the future, I shall be well content. I will work in seclusion, restrain myself within the limits of human power and not attempt to exceed them. I may hope for the proud consciousness of duty done from my labor, but that is the only reward, and perhaps, a tardy one. The mortal who works for an eternal aim, expects no recompense, and I am content the fruits shall appear after I am gone. But who gives us repose after our daily toil, who consolation after disappointment, recreation after labor? Surely, this a sweet wife alone can do. She rules her dear ones wisely, for her wisdom is in her heart: she hides all sorrow within herself, that her husband experience it not. Her hand is open to the needy, but closed against the thriftless; to each one she gives his right, and peace cleaves unto the footsteps. Such is Rachel, a wife after the holy poet's own heart, "her price is far above that of the choicest rubies!"

## LETTER XXIII.

MARCH 30TH, 185—

You ask me about Benjamin: alas! I fear I shall have to write only too much about him. I do not like to do so, because I feel it is partly my own fault. In the excitement of the last few weeks, I had lost sight of him entirely. He has greatly altered; I must retrieve now, Heaven knows if it will be possible!

I have been introduced to her, to his Princess. I fetched Benjamin from the theatre; we had been invited to take tea with her. She was alone in her elegantly furnished parlor, which was in keeping with her own stately demeanor. I can not guess her age; it is probably somewhere in the shady portion of the twenties. She is rather imposing in appearance, has a lively face with charming brown eyes; when she laughs, as she often does, a fat little dimple puts in an appearance, which gives her an intensely saucy look.

She received us amiably and without restraint. Benjamin who, during the walk, had been full of her praise, became as bashful as a boy in her presence. I had come thither with the face of a Puritan, determined to play the cold spectator, but I was carried away by her merry brightness. Involuntarily at first, I at length entered into her mood intentionally, in order to fathom her better. The theatre of course formed the topic of our conversation. Conversation do I say? No, she was on the stage, and we were the audience whose applause she sought to win, and won. We came to talk about her colleague Zierlich, and at once she cast herself at my feet, and in the accents of a foppish Romeo, begged my love, implored a kiss; taking my hand at the time, leaning her forehead on my knee as if unintentionally, and with a charm that was the triumph of Art. Then she sprang up and was transformed suddenly from that sweet Romeo into the yet sweeter Juliet of her rival on the boards. How she lisped and mouthed thy golden words, great Shakespeare! Pardon me, but I could not control my hearty laughter! And then my old love of

theatricals revived, and with funereal voice and convulsive gestures I began to burlesque our English actors. You should have seen how she hissed and criticised me; even Benjamin could not help laughing. And then she began to castigate her own mannerism with so much amiable humor that I could not be angry with her; she is really an enchanting woman.

"Why are you so quiet, little one?" she said to Benjamin as she kissed him good-by, and turning to me she continued: "He always wishes to have me alone, and grudges me any company."

"Well, I will own I think he is right," I replied, "on condition that he make an exception in my favor."

"Surely," said she, giving me her hand. "*Au revoir!*"

Walking home, Benjamin was unusually silent, and once out of her presence, I reflected with sadness how pernicious this woman's influence might become for the youth.

"You do not ask me how I was pleased with her, Benjamin, and before you were so eager for my opinion."

"I do not need it," he replied roughly, "I saw enough."

"What, jealous?" I cried laughing. "For shame, cousin!"

"Well, yes, I always am, Samuel, when she is with anybody else, and you can not deny she was extraordinarily amiable towards you——"

"I do not know how she is with others, Benjamin."

"That is true; she is pleasant towards all; it is her manner, although she knows I can not bear it."

"My dear Benjamin, you will have to put up with a great deal with an actress."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Loving an actress is a process of torment, on account of the jealousy which she groundlessly excites in us, if she be virtuous; and if she be not virtuous——"

"But Julia is!" he cried quickly.

"Who speaks of Julia? I was talking of actresses in general. He who accepts a position must not draw back from the conditions which custom annex thereto. You love an actress, you must therefore become accustomed to have real or imagined rivals around you."

"And shall you be one of them?"



"You are silly, Benjamin. I do not think I am capable of a love which is to be mere inclination without hope of possession. Besides, Julia is not the sort of woman that could attract me. I have little sense of beauty, and a woman pleases me, not by bodily charms or ready wit, but by a certain harmony of character, which performs duties both great and small at the dictates of a true and noble heart, with equal calmness and devotion. A soul too true to seek for public approval or yet to defy it, one whose holy simplicity purifies all in its circle, in a word all that true womanliness which I find only in——"

"Only in whom, Samuel?"

"Only in your sister!"

He pressed my hand silently.

"Are you satisfied now, Benjamin?"

"I am."

We continued our walk in silence. "You disapprove of my love then?" he asked after a pause, in a voice which plainly showed how he struggled with the question.

"I do not say that, cousin."

"But you think it."

"Understand me rightly, Benjamin: he who seeks a love for amusement's sake, will find it in this woman; if he were to give her his whole soul, he would receive the delicate thing back somewhat tarnished."

"But she loves me, Samuel."

"A fine reason indeed! What is it to you if she loves you?"

"I mean, she returns my love."

"All the worse for you. All the firmer will she hold you, all the more surely destroy you!"

"How pathetic you have become, and before you were so merry!" I had evidently touched him.

"My merriness, my friend, had its reason. But now I know that you will bring grief upon your father's head, if you do not give her up, and upon your poor sister. Believe me, cousin, passion intoxicates. I am not speaking without experience. When that is over, you will find yourself alone upon a road of misery and degradation on which it is impossible to return."

"But I love her, Samuel!" he replied hoarsely, "I love her more than anything else that I have ever known. A glance of her pier-

ces to my very soul, and raises me into a heaven of delight for a whole day. I could cast myself at her feet and bless her if her foot spurned me!"

"Unhappy fool!" I muttered, deeply moved.

"I will go away, that my father may hear nothing, nor Rachel, but leave her—I *can not*! Only since I have known her do I live, is my heart awakened. Do not require that I should have greater trust in the words of a third party, which only enter my ears, than in the violent power which glows in my veins, makes up a portion, nay, the whole of myself!"

"I do not ask it," I responded. "But question yourself whether you have not persuaded yourself into the belief of this all-potent violence in you. Men can combat their passions; there are cases where they must. Do not forget there are higher laws than those of your own feelings, laws which you can not transgress with impunity and which are eternal, while your emotion will last only the span of your life!"

"All lovers believe they are such in all eternity, Samuel, and did you not yourself tell me the highest moral precept is that of Love? You will say, not sensual love; but believe me, a purer fire permeates my soul too, and what is your Love, if not this noble sentiment that animates me, that seeks not my enjoyment, but its own happiness? Where shall I seek for it, if not within me? On what shall I lavish it, if not on the being who draws me so powerfully to her? What I ought to feel towards all, I may surely experience toward a few, toward one? I will dedicate myself to her, devote myself; alas! she has suffered much and needs a devoted soul. Where she is weak, I will be considerate, where she stumbles, support her; I will strive to correct her failings, but will not forget we are all mortal and prone to sin!"

His words fell heavily upon my heart. There before me was the victim of my theorizing. "You are a curious one, Benjamin," I said gayly. "No venerable father-confessor could flirt better with his young nun. Was it on this account you were so staid and quiet to-night?"

"I?" he exclaimed bewildered.

"Certainly, you; you are naturally inclined to jealousy. It is not your fault; but how nobly you restrained yourself! I will grant you

had no very formidable opponent in me. But do not despair. Your self-denial will find ample room: the fame of your actress is evidently on the increase; rich and handsome adorers will soon surround your lady-love, and you will look on with childish consideration and devotion. If anything go wrong, you are ready with your unlimited pardon—why shall a woman not err too?—*we are all mortal and prone to sin!*”

“Samuel!” he cried, letting go my arm. “She should die a thousand deaths if she betrayed me!”

“Benjamin, do you not see you are on the way to become a base hypocrite? It pained me to hear you recite the sanctimonious phrases of the priest. In theory you are an angel, full of love and compassion; in practice, a passionate brute!”

“Who gave me that theory but you, Samuel?”

“Alas! cousin, we have both erred, I in theory, and you in act. You see that they do not agree together, and that each one by itself leads to misery. I frankly confess, I have retracted; I have learned from your father to love only when I have satisfied the demands of justice, and to submit all my actions to the touchstone of my reason.”

“Very good, cousin. It may be your frenzy confirmed me in mine. But now I too love, firmly and unalterably. Do not think, however, that if you should suddenly fall to walking on your hands instead of your feet, I should forthwith imitate you. Do not be angry, cousin, I will not repeat your own words to you; they shall come back as little as discharged arrows——”

“‘Even if I gnaw my hands off,’ I suppose, as the Oriental proverb has it; unfortunately. Perhaps you will pardon me, Benjamin, when you too have awakened; pardon me for my duplicity. Believe me, my friend, it is not on account of your sister, as you think, that I lay stress upon *duty*; I used to be blind too, divided in myself. Listen, Benjamin, I came hither a Christian missionary——”

He stared at me. “Was that the reason——”

“Yes, dear cousin; I was brought up as a Christian, by Christians. I believed I should perform a good deed in converting the Jews, and in my zeal to this end, unfortunately was not over-scrupulous as to the means I employed. Thus I seduced you, and your belief of my doctrine confirmed me in my undertaking. How could I suspect you would so interweave it with your passion for Julia? Later

on, your excellent father took the bandage from my eyes; I learned to know the truth, to detest my former error!"

"Then you have become a Jew, not from foreign motives, but out pure conviction? Became a Jew in heart and soul out of respect for Truth? *Are* you a Jew as surely as you are standing before your God?"

"I am a Jew as surely as I am standing before my God!"

"Strange!" he muttered.

"Yes, cousin, I should be perfectly happy in the conviction I have attained, if I did not reproach myself with having confirmed you in your madness!"

"Madness? Am I then a child, Samuel? What matters it to Passion what guise she assumes?"

We reached home; all were sleeping. Benjamin lit the candles that stood ready for us, and we went up-stairs together. "Good night, dear cousin!" I said, holding out my hand. He seized it passionately.

"God be thanked!" he cried; "my father has at least one son after his own heart!" Then he rushed away to his room.

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## LETTER XXIV.

APRIL 4TH, 185-.

WHEN I went down-stairs to pay my regular visit to Rachel next evening, I found her alone, unusually pale and thoughtful, and without her accustomed needle-work. I asked her what was the matter; she shook her head in reply, and I saw her eyes were filled with tears.

"Samuel," she said at length, "I may tell you all. I have been longing for you to come down."

"Longing for me indeed! My hearty thanks, fair cousin!"



"Oh, do not joke, Samuel. Listen: I trust you in this matter because you are more earnest, not given to pleasure like other young men!"

"So you do me justice at length, little Rachel!"

"That is your only good feature," she retorted with a smile.

"I believe it," I answered, with a sigh. "People can only praise me for what I am *not*. But what is the matter?"

"I have to tell you," she said in a tone of the deepest sorrow, "that Benjamin is in love with some Christian girl!"

"Is that the whole misfortune?" I cried in pretended disappointment.

It was her turn then to be astonished.

"The whole misfortune, Samuel? It is true he has not been baptized yet. But do you not see this affair will lead to his apostasy? Samuel, this is no passing love-affair. While mending his coat, his pocket-book fell out, and from between the leaves of that, several opened letters, the superscription of which was plainly in a female hand. I unfolded some, Samuel, certainly in no idle curiosity. You will believe me that it was out of sisterly, nay, motherly love. Though but a little older than Benjamin, I have taken care of him since my eleventh year; a child watching over a child. Alas, cousin, I do not regret unfolding those letters; but what I read in them makes my heart heavy!"

"You judge like a girl, Rachel, or rather, have no judgment at all. You allow a few phrases to terrify you. You do not know enough of the world. A young man, a young girl if you will, falls in love a thousand times over, without any serious intentions for the future. It is a sort of pastime nowadays, a little zest for monotonous everyday-life. You are wrong to take the affair so seriously: the world has become more sensible. Juliet sheds tears yet, it is true, when Romeo takes his leave, but marries Paris and lives happily with him, while her hero goes to France perhaps, instead of Mantua, and swears unalterable love—for a fortnight—to some other beauty."

"No, no," she said earnestly. "If this is the custom among Christians, may it ever remain unknown to our people. Benjamin is ignorant of it, and if he knew it, would scorn it. No, Samuel, you wrong him; his feelings are too deep and pure, he does not love for the pleasure of loving. He loves her, to make her happy, and I

know he is capable of sacrificing himself for her. The moral obligation which he thinks he has accepted, will bind him more than passion——”

“But Rachel, all that binds him is of everyday——”

“Do not ask me,” she continued, blushing deeply, “I read more than I liked in those letters, more than was becoming perhaps for a girl; but they are well written, she writes splendidly!”

“And you think she loves Benjamin?”

“Scarcely: a woman who loves a man, will not allow him to make enormous sacrifices for her.”

“You know very little about the human heart, little moralist!”

“And if love—no, if her passion, is so blind as to demand that, still she would not talk whole pages full about it. I could not tell those who were dearest to me that I loved them, even with one word!”

“That is still no proof, cousin Rachel, what *you* could or could not do. Unless you did perhaps once love a man?”

“For shame, Samuel, you are unbearable. Do not tease me to-day, I beg! Is the lad’s destruction a matter of utter indifference to you?”

“Nay, Rachel; but I must confess that the whole matter was not unknown to me, and that I already have taken steps to unravel the knot; but beware of violent means.”

“And let the affair take its own course until it is too late?”

“No, Rachel; let the affair develop itself naturally. He will discover soon enough that his heroine is not an angel in human form, as he takes her to be, and then he will give her her *cong  *.”

“You do not know Benjamin; he has a feeling heart. But if what I dread should happen?”

“I should grieve for your poor father no less than you would!”

“It is not my father who is in question,” she replied, “dear as he is to me, deeply as his sufferings would hurt me. We have to think of a young life on the verge of a precipice. Samuel, you do not understand me. What are our pains, our sufferings? It is not the first time we experience them, and we know that time alleviates them. But shall he commit a fearful sin, defiantly open his mouth to blaspheme the Eternal, and carry the penalty of his crime all the days of his life? When I think of this——” she burst into loud sobs.

I was touched by her words, more so by her tears. "But what can we do, dear Rachel?"

"Do? Do you ask? He must be separated from her immediately, must be forced to give her up. He is an imprudent child, and his friends must act for him."

"Right enough, Rachel; but do you not know that violence only increases lovers' obstinacy? You will never sever the connection thus: even your father's command could not do it."

"He will never command," she said, without restraining her tears. "He thinks too much of a human being, even if it be his own son, to use compulsion."

"But one method remains then, dear cousin."

"What is that, Samuel?"

"Perhaps *you* can decide the matter, perhaps she can not resist a sister's entreaty——"

"What should I think of Benjamin if I owed him to such a woman's mercy? No, Samuel, if I were to see her, we should scarcely part in friendship. Will *you* attempt it?"

"I know her already, she would laugh at me."

"What can we do? What can we do?"

"Take your father into counsel."

"No, Samuel, not before it is absolutely necessary. Let us spare him suffering as long as we can. It will come to him all too soon. I have the greatest anxiety for his delicate health. No, it would be of no use. He is opposed to all violence, and as affairs stand now, we should but hasten the catastrophe. But hush, I hear his steps."

"Whose steps, Rachel?"

"Benjamin's; do not let him notice——" and she snatched up the paper lying on the table.

Benjamin entered with a jovial "Good evening, folks," and when he saw his sister busily reading the paper, exclaimed, "Wonder of wonders! Rachel reading the paper and—can I believe my eyes?—actually a worldly theatrical criticism!"

"Almost as great a wonder," she replied without looking up, "as that we should be honored this evening with Mr. Benjamin's company!"

"Now, Rachel, come: am I not almost every evening——"

"Not at home, sir!"

"What a splendid wife you will make, my dear; you hear, Samuel, how she tyrannizes over her brother already!"

"Her brother certainly does not need the tyranny of his sister," I observed.

"You tease!" he replied coloring; "but nowadays, even in the most righteous cause against a woman, a man is sure to find no sympathy among men."

"Therefore the women are more just towards us," I said.

"Perhaps, Samuel; but, Rachel, you seem really angry with me." And he sat down at her side and patted her hand. "Come, little mother mine, what is my transgression? Do you grudge me any pleasure?"

"If it is a lawful one, Benjamin."

He let her hand fall. "How strange you are to-night! Do you think I would do anything wicked, Rachel?"

"Wicked? No, Benjamin; but you are thoughtless and impulsive, you would not do anything wrong intentionally, but I fear you might be entangled before you knew it——"

"Gracious! a sermon, Samuel!" he exclaimed with a disconcerted smile; "it is her way, she torments those she loves. Here I came home in the merriest mood possible, rejoicing at the prospect of spending a pleasant evening with you, and——"

"Dear Benjamin," she responded with moistened eyes, grasping his hands; "am I then so cross?"

"Now there: she knows well enough that I am going to give her a kiss, and that will make her the best girl under the sun!"

"Can I help my nature, brother? It is my disposition to remove what lies in the way, I can not go by it in silence."

"Who blames you for that, Rachel? I too am averse to sulking. But tell me what you are aiming at?"

"I am afraid Benjamin, that you are not in the best of company!"

"Company," he replied; "you know my associates, what fault do you find with the poor fellows?"

She made no reply. He stood up and walked up and down the room whistling. I took a candle to go to my room. "Do me the favor to remain, Samuel," he exclaimed passionately. "I only came home on your account!"

She answered not. Her hands in her lap, she leaned forward with



her gaze directed downwards, and with an expression in her face which cut me to the heart.

“For shame, Benjamin!” I said. “Do not pretend to misunderstand Rachel. It is a pitiful love that fears to correct the beloved’s faults.”

“If I only knew what she reproaches me with!” riveting his brown eyes impatiently on his dejected sister; “but these hints and covert accusations are enough to make me crazy!”

There was another pause. “What is the date to-day, Benjamin?” she suddenly asked in a hoarse voice.

“The 30th March,” he answered in astonishment.

“I mean in the Jewish calendar.”

“Do you imagine I carry the *Luach* (calendar) in my head?”

“In father’s room a death-light is burning! Do you know what day to-morrow is now? Towards dusk, father kept looking for you, he longed to have you say the prayer for our dear mother!——”

“It is the 6th of Nissan!” he cried in a hoarse voice, deeply agitated.

“It is the 6th of Nissan!” she repeated softly.

“I am truly sorry to have forgotten that, dear sister, but I was with——” He stopped suddenly. Then he continued after a pause, “But in any case I would not have said *Kaddish*.<sup>20</sup> Can I not recall my sainted mother’s memory without that? Do you think my prayer benefits her?”

She shook her head mournfully: “Perhaps it benefits *you*, brother!”

He made no reply.

“I only know,” she continued, “that as dear mother lay on her death-bed, I often heard her murmur: ‘My only comfort is that my sons will say *Kaddish* for me always!’ Poor mother!”

## LETTER XXV.

APRIL 6TH, 185-.

WHEN we went up-stairs, I accompanied Benjamin into his room, as I wished to have some more conversation with him. He sat down at the table, leaned his head upon his hands, and gazed into the candle flame. "Cousin," I said, "where were you this evening?"

He looked up, his melancholy features flashed brightly.

"I was with her, Samuel, with her and alone; she did not play to-night. What a splendid woman, Samuel! What grand ideas she has of life. I blush at the pettiness of my former ideas. She knows how to raise me above the common herd with her grand views. I learn with her for the first time with what prejudice I have been surrounded, I learn to be free. I can not tell you how the contrast sickens me: when I contemplate the meanness of the petty life with all its inconveniences, that sweet family life, about which you are so enthusiastic, in all its glory!"

"About whose head is this glory, round yours or your sister's, do you think?"

"This is not time to play on words, Samuel. I desire to know to what end I am living. Why shall I roll along the track like a railroad car, mechanically, while other young people deviate from the iron path as they please, and are not shattered, as they used to threaten me?"

"It may be, cousin, you do not see those who are wrecked, and notice only those who are saved!"

"Ah, you do not understand us Jews. It is not a question of my so-called escapade: that even my virtuous sister would eventually forgive. But that I should dare to love a Christian, and perhaps change the name of my religion, that is the great crime in their eyes. First Judaism, and then morality, they say."

"And suppose these Jews are right?"

"Oh, I had forgotten you have become one of our—one of them: you, a *savant*, have actually swallowed down all the old prejudices bodily. What sort of justice can I expect from you now?"

"Cousin, you used to have confidence in my brain, perhaps, too, in my heart. I of course shall have something to gain if I win more love from you, by combating your foolish infatuation; but that woman who has enthralled you has no interest in holding you, is not blinded by passion as you are!"

"Let us talk as friends," he replied, "and you shall see that at least I am not blind. But first pardon my violence, I know you are well disposed towards me. But only reflect how it must hurt me, if you too side against me without having heard my plea."

"My dear boy," I answered, "tell me how in the world any sensible person can countenance a twenty-year-old young man's attaching himself in love to a person so much his senior? It is a love-relationship which undermines him morally and physically, draws him from the cultivation of his talents, sows dissension between him and his family, and wounds those most deeply to whom he is bound by the tenderest ties of gratitude. You see I leave religion out of the question, as you desire. My dear Benjamin, now that I have made the acquaintance of your goddess, with all the vehemence at my command, I bid you, I insist upon your relinquishing this connection with that woman. You will be ruined, Benjamin, the more slowly the more surely and irretrievably!"

"And what reason am I to assign for my cowardice, Samuel? 'The desire of my family' would sound very pretty in a boy. Now hear me," he continued with confidence, "hear me and see whether I am so brainless a fool as you take me to be.

"I have always been of opinion that an unmarried life is not a desirable one"—I could scarcely repress a smile, but fortunately my young marriage-enthusiast did not notice it—"I possess a considerable fortune from my mother, which my father will no longer be able to withhold from me in a few years."

"Benjamin, Benjamin!"

"Will not seek to withhold from me!" he cried impatiently. "But you demand that I shall speak like you sensible people. In a few years then, and not before I shall marry." This time I did not laugh, as his fixed determination commenced to terrify me. "With

my small income I shall be able to support a wife. This wife herself, too, is an artist, my dear Julia, who would wait her whole lifetime for me!"—here I made two large mental notes of interrogation.—"You ask me now whether I shall continue my studies? No, it would take too long before anything came of them. I have another and a more practical plan. Several competent judges have discerned some mimic talent in me: this I shall cultivate. At first in private society, in which I have already made a commencement. Then I shall appear upon some small stage, in order, in due time, to make my debut, through Julia's influence, in the Court theatre!"

"Hm, there is at least method in your madness."

"Samuel!"

"A practical plan indeed! Then your father can have the pleasure, like the good Vicar of Wakefield, of seeing his son act! I can not help it, Benjamin, the truth must be told you," I continued earnestly. "Instead of devoting yourself to the honorable profession of a physician and *savant* which lies open before you, you intend sacrificing yourself to the precarious, thorny life of an actor? Yes, sacrifice! I know the calling, and I foretell for you a life of abject misery!"

"Then all are fools who select the actor's profession?"

"Not all, Benjamin. He who feels talent within him, is right to follow it; is perhaps bound to do so. But you, my friend? You never had any decided inclination for the stage, mathematics was your favorite study, and now, led away by a fancy, you suddenly intend becoming an actor, because, as you say, a few judges have discerned *some* dramatic talent in you."

"Well, it is not absolutely necessary to run away from home to become an Iffland. You will grant, I suppose, that a sensible and industrious man can aid nature materially."

"Why certainly. I myself should hope, by diligent practice, to become a very respectable painter in time, *i. e.*, a house painter. The artist is born, not made!"

"Enough, Samuel; then I will become a tenth-rate artist if you will, but at least a man. Are there not many beautiful points on which we agree with our brothers? May I not prove this by entering the communion of that invisible Church, as it has been called? I belong to the future, not to the past: I will be a German, and not a Jew. Is it not better to belong to that than to dish up



those old stories about Egypt again? And the fame and grandeur of my fatherland shall henceforth be my pride, and not those shriveled mummies!"

"You would make me angry, if I myself were not the cause of your fatal blindness. But go and see how they will welcome you: strip off, as you announce, the only thing that makes you a man, and then you will be pure spirit enough for them! You tell me again of what you intend doing. Allow me to be somewhat doubtful of the consistency of your soap-bubbles: the more so, as you have never yet achieved anything in life, and now the first opportunity comes, are about to cast adrift, without any compunction, from your father, your family, and your religion."

"You do not understand me, Samuel. In order to attain freedom, I *must*—do you think it does not pain me too?—I must break the base bonds that bind me, must remember that I am not here for father and family alone!"

"Alas!" I cried in agitation. "Alas! you have proved his words! 'What lies at the bottom of your noble enthusiasm, your over-strained virtue? The animal of Egotism.' Thus spoke your own father, but he did not know he was lashing his own son therewith. See, Benjamin, thus far has it come with you: you are terrified at yourself! What lofty, irresistible vocation is that which calls you, in spite of yourself, to this huge ingratitude? Leave aside all empty phrases: it is nothing but selfishness, common selfishness! My beloved friend, are a woman's tears mightier than your father's gray hairs? O Benjamin, confess all to him who loves you so dearly, loves you beyond all else: surely he will have consideration, will have compassion for you!"

"Never!" he exclaimed. "It is too late!" he added in a sombre tone, "it is too late, I must follow my destiny."

"For shame, do not seek refuge in that excuse of the weak! It is we ourselves who shape our destiny! Try and be a man, and cast off this woman. Leave the country with me, accompany me to England; acquire some experience before you venture on so all-important a step. At present a mere stranger rules you: whatever you say, it is she who uses your mouth. She bids you swear fealty to a lie: does she reflect for a moment that she is poisoning your whole future? That your conscience will torment you unceasingly?"

What does an actress know of religion? She bids you rend the ties that bind you to your family, regarding little whether the separation cause their heart's blood to flow: what cares she, if, when you shall have sundered her apron-string, you find yourself alone, alone with a wretched, worthless——"

"I have borne long enough with you, Samuel," he interrupted, "stop now, or we shall part as enemies!"

"As enemies? Unhappy boy! do you not see what I suffer because I know you to be on the brink of misery, where I wandered so long, in such agony? Would that I could give you my experience! I too was a visionary like you, I too—alas! for those dreams! They were vain and empty! But here I have found new life. Here I have become happy through the father, and now unhappy through the son!"

"Samuel!"

"Nay, I shall never forgive myself as long as I live, for having been the main cause of your misfortune!"

"You make me angry, Samuel," forcing back his tears. "You are not the cause of my action. I might have yielded to you—yes, I will yield—for—when I think of dear old father—and Rachel—and—but no: it can not be—*it can not be!* I have sworn: I have given my word to her—I can not retract—I can not leave the woman who has given herself to me!"

"I esteem your honorable feeling, Benjamin; but believe me, oh, believe me, it is your enemy in this case! This exaggerated morality will poison your whole after-life. Your duty comes first, then your duty again, and ever your duty, and *then* your new debts. You dare not contract new until the old ones are honored: you may not keep a vow which was wrong to take. Oh, be guarded against that fearful fallacy: your word is holy, but *holier still* your duty towards your God and your parents! On that side, there is a woman who will console herself after a few tears; on this side, an aged father, whom you hasten to his grave with a broken heart! Benjamin, Benjamin, shall your old father lose both his sons in a worse way than through death?"

He rose quickly, held out his hands, with a deathly pallor in his countenance, and exclaimed: "Leave me! leave me! You torture me to death! Leave me alone, man, I conjure you!"

## LETTER XXVI.

APRIL 8TH, 185-.

I HAD left him. Sighing over my lost friend and over the destroyed peace of the happy household, I had just lit my lamp, when there was a knock at my door. "Has he thought better of it? Has his better genius prevailed?"

The knocking was repeated lightly. "Come in, Benjamin, what ceremony you are making!" The door opened. "Do come in! Of what are you afraid?"

"I am not afraid!" said a soft, sweet voice. It was not Benjamin, it was his sister. She stepped into the room without a shadow of disconcertedness in her pale features, set her lamp down on the table, and said with a faint smile: "Are you angry, cousin, that I disturb you at such a late hour?"

"It is you, Rachel?"

"I, and not my ghost, Samuel. But how curious you look, have I frightened you?"

"What an idea, little cousin."

"Samuel, I wanted to speak to you to-night again about the boy. I was here an hour ago, but I heard you speaking loudly in his room. Tell me, what have you done with him?"

I shook my head sadly.

"Then he will immediately do his worst. I know him; we must prevent him at once."

"What can you do, dear cousin? Would you wish to lock him up? Let him follow out his madness and discover for himself whither it will lead him!"

"Alas, my friend!" she said, "how cruel you are towards the boy. A little coercion seems wrong to you, and yet you would calmly await his eternal unhappiness!"

"His eternal unhappiness! My dear girl, let us avoid exaggeration.

Do you think he will be cast into purgatory if he renounce Judaism? Believe me, he can be as good and as God-fearing a man as a Christian as he can while a Jew!"

"I do not doubt that, cousin. What do I know of purgatory? How strangely you talk!"

"I only wished to warn you against exaggerating the evil, Rachel. You see the misfortune is not so great. Let him find out his error, learn by experience!"

"For Heaven's sake, cousin, do not speak so coldly, so rationally. It makes me wretched!"

"Rachel——"

"I remember when poor mother died, there was deathlike quiet in the whole house, only subdued sobs in the rooms. I was only a child, but if any one had attempted to console me——And what is death, a necessary evil, contrasted with the loss of the living, the blooming——and you seek to console me beforehand!"

"Well, Rachel, can you suggest anything?"

"I think so. We have to use force now, even the police if necessary, to tear him from that woman, and send him away traveling, to cross his plans in any manner."

"Nay, cousin, that is too much. Who would have thought you capable of such tyranny? You wish to *force* your brother into a conviction——"

"I do not wish to force a *conviction* upon him, but a *will* of his own. I would preserve his liberty for him till he is old enough to guard it himself. Then he can do as he chooses. But why are we bandying words?" she exclaimed, taking her light, "I see we can come to no agreement. You will calmly allow your friend to drown, because he has the conviction that he can safely bathe in the fathomless stream; well, I will act without you——"

"Do not misunderstand me, Rachel!" I seized her hand; it was cold as ice, that tiny hand. "Do you think I do not heartily desire to alleviate your suffering? It is for that very reason that I counsel you against violence!"

"What has my suffering to do with it? It is you who do not understand me. I know I feel that my heart would break if my brother were to cast off his God, his people, his family. Now I learn what dear mother died of. I have one brother left, and he will be



my death. What does he care for his sister? He will heap shame upon his father's gray head; what cares he for father?"

"Rachel——"

"Nay, Samuel, you are of course going to explain and prove that experience and reason justify him in valuing himself higher than father and family, but I shall not understand you. I have but a poor head," laying her hand with a painful smile upon her forehead, "and I am sure I should not comprehend you. Let me act without you. If you men are always so cautious and so rational, God grant there may never be lacking a woman, who is ready to act and to suffer! Good night!"

As she was about to open the door, heavy steps came along the passage. We looked at each other; who could be up about the house so late, and for what purpose?

"Can it be your father?" I whispered.

She shook her head and listened. "It is Taube."

The steps stopped at my door: then there was a soft knock. I looked at Rachel, she nodded.

"Come in!" I cried. It was the old woman: she poked her head, covered with a huge antique night-cap, into the room. Her wrinkled features had a mysterious, anxious cast, but speech died away from her half-opened lips as she saw her young mistress.

"Good gracious, miss!——"

"Am I then so terrifying, Taube?" said Rachel, smiling; "come right in."

"Come along, Taube," said I, "and tell me to what I owe the pleasure of this visit?"

The old woman cast a furtive glance at her young mistress, who eyed her intently, and smoothing down her apron said:—"Yes, yes. One sees many things in eighty years."

"You could have imparted that piece of experience to me to-morrow morning, Taube!"

"Yes, well, I will only take your boots and go."

"But, Taube, my boots are standing outside the door. You need not have come in for them."

"Well, but suppose I want to clean an extra pair for you? No harm done, I suppose; I can only sleep a few hours, and if I get up early, I do not know what to do to keep my hands busy."

"I see, Taube, my presence disturbs you," said Rachel; "I am going, and you can leave the boots alone."

"What I have to say to Mr. Samuel, Miss Rachel, the whole world may hear. But thank goodness, I did not go down to your room first, as I intended. If I had not found you there, I should have raised the house in my fright."

"Well, Taube, I had to speak about something of importance concerning Benjamin."

"About the boy?"

"About the boy, and I am sorry to say, nothing good."

"Why, that is the very thing brought me here!"

"What do you know about Benjamin, Taube?"

"It is very strange," she replied, "but I guess I get things confused, and there is really no cause to be alarmed. I generally polish the boots early in the evening, but to-night my cousin, Blind Hannah, came to see me; she is blind in one eye; and we got chatting so that the time flew by quickly. What a lot she told me, and not much good in it. But that's neither here nor there. Well, when she got up to go, I saw the clock pointed to twelve; so I crept upstairs quietly, and as I was taking away the boots from Benjamin's door, I heard him sob and moan. It fell upon my heart like a hundred-weight, and something told me all was not right, for the boy had acted quite strange in the last few weeks; so, craving your pardon, I bent down and looked through the key-hole. And there I saw the boy not yet gone to bed, the wardrobe open, the bureau drawers scattered around, and all the clean clothes lying trampled on the ground, and him standing over them, stuffing them into his valise, stopping now and then, and sobbing and crying, enough to melt a stone!"

Here the old girl could contain herself no longer and burst out crying. Rachel stood, pale as a ghost, convulsively clutching the back of a chair.

"If he were going on a journey, would he not tell me? And what is he moaning for, if all is right? So I half died with anxiety, and did not know whom to tell. Master is up yet, I know; but shall I go and disturb him as he sits at the *Gemorah*? Miss Rachel is asleep, and if I awake her, I may frighten her to death. So I said to myself, go and tell Mr. Samuel, he has traveled a deal, and is older

than Benjamin; he will give you good advice. So I came, and see I was not wrong, for Miss Rachel thinks as I do. But good God, Miss, what ails you? You look just like my poor dear mistress."

"That will do, Taube, thanks for your good opinion. Leave us alone, we shall succeed in remedying the evil, I trust. Go, Taube, we will tell you all later."

"Oh, I am not afraid, she has no secret from me; but it is better she should go to bed now," and she put her arm round the pale girl with motherly affection. "What is the matter, child?" seating her upon a chair, "cry, let your tears run, or it will break your heart." And she put her head on the old woman's bosom and burst into tears.

"That's right, my darling!" she muttered softly, stroking her hair with her bony fingers; "you will see, you are worrying yourself about nothing, it will be all right. Your dear departed mother will help you, help you and the boy; don't you think so, Mr. Samuel?"

"Thanks, dear old Taube," murmured Rachel, "you will not leave us, will you?"

"I leave you?" exclaimed the old woman; "how can you speak so! I left your grandmother, peace to her (what a strict mistress she was), and was an active young woman then. I could have married well, for Melech the glazier wanted me, but I would not leave your mother; I loved the child more than my life. So I went with her when she married, took care of all her children and of her, buried her, and have lived here in peace for five and thirty years, and never had a cross word from your father, nor from you, nor from Benjamin. And now I am going downhill, you surely will not drive me away?"

Rachel pressed her hand silently, and I was glad that the old woman drew her thoughts away from her own suffering.

"You look tired, Rachel, will you not go to bed? Or do you feel strong enough to consult a little longer?"

"If you please, Samuel."

"Why, readily."

"Then Taube, leave us alone a few moments longer."

"I am going. But, Rachel dear, won't you let me bring you a nice cup of tea?"

"No, thanks, dear Taube, I am well enough."

"Oh, it will do you good," said the old woman imploringly; "it will do you good, it always did your mother good."

"Well then, take a cup into my room, and go to bed again, please."

The old woman nodded pleasantly, bade me good-night, and hurried off into the kitchen. Rachel was sitting still upon the same chair, her moist eyes riveted steadfastly upon the ground in thought; her face was pale, almost sallow, and yet the usual sweet expression was there. I did not think: I only watched her.

"Listen, my friend," she began, with a firm voice, "listen to what I have to tell you. It seems to me nobody is more fitted to help us in this strait than our elder brother."

"Just so," I said mechanically.

"I would claim his assistance, but I dare not see him: father has forbidden it."

"Just so," I responded.

"So I thought to myself that you, dear Samuel, would perhaps go to him and beg him in my name to use his whole influence to keep the boy straight by persuasion or by force. He can do it, he is a councillor, or something as important."

"Just so."

"It is agreed then," she said rising. "At what time will you go there, Samuel?"

"Are you going already, dear Rachel?"

"Why cousin, of course. Is it not late enough?"

"Would that you might never leave me, dearest girl!" I exclaimed seizing her hands.

"Dear cousin, dear Samuel, do not do that; let me go!"

"No, Rachel, you must hear me now," and I held her as if I were to lose her forever. "You must learn now that I love you dearly, adore you; tell me then, will you be mine?"

"Dear friend," she said with a charming blush, "you know whom you have to ask for me, so do not ask me any more, not at this hour, not at this place——"

I kissed her. She touched my lips softly, freed herself gently from my arms, and said: "Then you will go to-morrow, Samuel?"

"Of course, Rachel. Whither do you mean?"

"O cousin, were you not listening to me just now?"

"I was thinking of you only."



“Naughty cousin! Here is my elder brother’s address. Go to him and beg him in my name for his advice, for his aid. I will have you called early in the morning, shall I?”

“All right, but you only think of Benjamin!”

“Why of course, cousin——”

Her words made me feel very sad, disappointed. I sank into my chair, and leaned my weary head upon the back. Suddenly I felt two soft arms clasp me tenderly, with an ardor which thrilled me through and through. “Sleep sweetly, my only friend!” she whispered, and then disappeared before I could speak to her.

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## LETTER XXVII.

APRIL 9TH, 185—.

How I slept that night, I do not know. I do not even know whether I slept at all, but in the morning I felt like regenerated. I had lived out one life, I had died long ago. My former love had been a folly, my grand labor madness, my whole existence error and mistake. So I buried it with a sigh, and stood wondering at myself for being able to outlive it. But now reanimating warmth spreads through my heart, not the fierce flame of fanaticism, of the adoration of an error; it is a spark of the divine fire that played upon the Burning Bush but did not consume it, the eternal fervor that saved my ancestors when their Temple had crashed to ruin. How often have I said to myself since my arrival in this house—“Teach me, ye pure and holy Hebrews, to walk in your paths, without complaining, without murmuring; teach me to be contented, to enjoy with satisfaction.” I have learned much of you, but the best, the highest of all you did not tell me, because it can not be told. Then came your love, dear

girl, like summer lightning in the dark night, like the sudden flash that shows the traveler the narrow bridge over the rushing torrent. Yes, my adored wife, as you shall be, you shall teach me to be a man, a true man !

The old woman knocked at my door early. I dressed quickly and hurried to the street which my cousin had written upon a piece of paper. There were no carriages to be hired so early, so I had to walk an hour before I reached Mr. Councillor's villa. It stood apart from the surrounding houses, in the middle of a large garden. On other doorsteps I saw neat servants cleaning, gardeners digging and attending to the plants, but everything was quiet at that house, the garden looked as if it had run wild for years, the walks were dirty and covered with rank grass. I mounted the steps and rang. Nobody came. I looked at my watch, it was six o'clock ; rather early to pay a visit to such a great man. " I imagine he will not be well pleased at being roused from his sleep." I rang again and roused the echoes in the whole house. At last a window up-stairs was dashed open, and a pale, long face appeared.

" Who is it making such a din down there ? "

" Somebody who wishes to speak to——" I looked at the paper, for you dare never omit a title here——" to speak to Councillor Neumann."

" Come back at nine o'clock."

" I have pressing business and must see the councillor."

" I tell you, you must come again. Do not disturb me, and go away."

" Well, pray do not discommode yourself. I am going to ring away here till the servant opens the door"—and I gave another mighty tug at the bell.

" Sir," he cried, as his yellow face flushed with a sickly red ; " who the deuce are you, how can you dare to force an entrance into my house ? "

" I am your cousin."

" I have no cousin ! "

" Excuse me, one stands before you. I come from England."

He stared at me a few moments, and closed the window without replying. I stood still awhile ; all remained quiet.

" I will not budge without an answer to my errand ! " I shouted,

and was just going to give another pull, when I heard slow steps coming down-stairs; they approached, and the door was opened. It was the lanky gentleman from the window, in a black velvet dressing-gown.

"I am the only one awake in the house; come in." Goodness knows whether there was any one else in the old barn at all.

He closed the door, turned, and without saying a word further, went up-stairs.

"Come down and open this door again!" I exclaimed, seizing the handle, and with difficulty repressing a curse: I could have knocked him down, "I have had enough of you."

He turned half round on the stairs, and said with a mocking smile, "First you attempt to break into the house to speak to me, and now, Mr.—, let us see, what does the gentleman call himself, Mr. Cousin of mine, you are in such a hurry to depart? Well, the key is in the door."

"Even if I had come to you on my own account," I replied, "it is not a worthy manner to receive your father's brother's son. I have had enough of you now—" and I unlocked the door again—"and Rachel was foolish to expect a remedy from such a poisonous old serpent as you are."

He came down-stairs, looked me full in the face. He had become a different man. "Rachel?" he whispered so softly and tenderly that I gazed on him in astonishment. He took me by the hand.

"I beg your pardon with all my heart; pardon me, pray," and he forced me to precede him, "come into my room. Have a little consideration for my poor head; I did not sleep the whole night."

I did as he desired, shaking my head thoughtfully. We entered a large, cold-looking room. I do not know wherefore I felt so frosty, it was spring out of doors, the trees were all green, and I left a blithe bullfinch singing under my window. He pushed a chair towards me, I noticed with surprise there was no other seat in the room, then the tall, lean figure took up his stand opposite me, and his small black eyes gazed at me piercingly.

"I come, sir, at the request of my cousin Rachel. Her younger brother is on the point of leaving his father's house to marry an actress, a Christian, and so——" I was going to add "*follow your*

*very worthy example,*" for I had not yet quite forgiven the lanky fellow, but as I gazed upwards, I saw such an expression of pain as made me shudder—"Rachel is tempted by this impending misfortune, as much on your father's account as on your brother's——"

I paused. A dull heavy moan resounded through the room. I could have wept for him, for the councillor in his velvet dressing-gown and in his deserted study, who had not slept the whole night long.

There was a long silence. He stood in front of me, his hands clasped behind his back, his head bent forward. I had to speak again.

"Your sister beséeches you——"

"Yes, my sister, my father's daughter, O my sister!——"

He stopped suddenly. It shot painfully through my brain. *Was he mad?* He rushed to the window and leaned out, so far out that I feared he would fall through. Then he rushed back, took a large glass of water, and emptied it at a draught. Then he approached me—I had risen too—and placed his hand upon my shoulder confidently.

"Cousin," he said, "you are the son of my uncle, who often fondled me on his knee when I was a child; pardon my eccentricity; I live a secluded life here; come in contact with nobody, and each new face terrifies me. You know I have given up practicing. For twelve years since my wife died—we had not been married as many weeks—I live here alone, quite alone. I am writing about the *Cabeiri*, the primordial deities. But that does not concern you, perhaps. However, that makes me often very absent-minded, and I almost forget that I am alive. But you have reminded me, by a few words, that I have yet duties to perform. Tell my sister she has not been deceived in me; that I will do my utmost to shield our venerable father from this suffering. Where can I see the young man? To my father's house, of course, you know——" and the exile from his father's countenance turned away his face.

"If I can not get him here by nine o'clock, I will send you word; shall you be home up to midday?"

"I never go out before five in the afternoon."

"Then good-by for the present, and excuse my violent self-introduction. The greatest expedition was necessary, as your brother will probably leave the house this morning."



"God reward you for your kindness on behalf of my brother; *au revoir.*"

I was glad to breathe the fresh air again. "What a creature, what a creature!" I repeated as I shook my head. "Heaven preserve us from such cousinship!" I felt quite unhappy that I had to see him again. And that was the blooming youth Rachel enthroned in her memory! But he taught me to understand one man, that abominable rector who used to teach me Hebrew when a child, *the converted Jew of Moorfield Park!*

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## LETTER XXVIII.

APRIL 10TH, 185-.

WHEN I returned home, Benjamin had disappeared. I immediately took a carriage and drove to the councillor's, whose old house-keeper received me this time and led the way into a dusty parlor. He soon made his appearance, dressed in black, and wearing the star of some order upon his breast. I had to confess he was still of very imposing presence. "You come to fetch me?" he asked.

I bowed.

"To——?"

"To the actress."

We entered the carriage, and in half an hour stopped before Mademoiselle Julia's dwelling. We sent in our cards and were bidden to walk in. The actress, in an elegant morning-toilet, was standing over Benjamin, who was writing at a desk, and looking over his shoulder. She greeted us cordially.

"Welcome, gentlemen; to what do I owe the pleasure of this early call?" Looking at the councillor: "With whom have I the pleasure?"

"Councillor Neumann," I introduced him. "Pardon us, mademoiselle," I continued, "for disturbing you. We desired to speak with Mr. Benjamin, and as he was not at his father's house, we were compelled to seek him here."

Benjamin turned round and looked at me defiantly. My companion went to him and said: "Young man, can I have a few moments' conversation with you?"

He looked at Julia, then shook his head.

"I have no secrets from my betrothed."

"Just so, but I have perhaps. Permit us, Mademoiselle: you would greatly oblige me."

"The young man is his own master," she answered, tossing her curls.

The councillor shook his head. "Well, it must be so!" Then he bent over Benjamin and addressed him tenderly: "Do you not know me, brother?"

Benjamin stared. "Yes," he continued, "I am your brother, your lost brother. Have you no remembrance of him, no sign of love? Am I then quite forgotten?"

The young man sprang up and embraced him cordially. "O Simeon, thank God I have seen you once!" Julia gazed in astonishment, and I think a little moved, at the reunion. But immediately she turned to me, and taking up a cup, asked, "Will you take a cup of tea?" I answered with a contemptuous look.

"Then let us be seated," she continued calmly, "let us be seated; we will be the kindly audience. Evidently we are going to witness a tragedy, or an emotional melodrama after the style of Iffland or Kotzebue!"

"I rather think it is more in the style of the younger Dumas!" I retorted. The blood flushed to her face, but she replied in unmoved voice:—

"You mean the Lady of the Camelias? Oh, no: nothing of the sort; you will find no artificial sentimentality with me. I will wager the lady in this case is not so stupid as to sacrifice herself!"

"Reassure yourself, mademoiselle, nobody expects it of her!"

While we entertained each other so amiably, the councillor had drawn his brother into the bay window. He had thrown his arm around him as if to keep him from a bodily fall, while Benjamin looked

up into his eyes. What a change in the dry old bookworm! His features were full of life, his eyes flashed brilliantly, he spoke earnestly, passionately, but so low that we could not distinguish a word. Why did he point so bitterly to the order upon his breast, clutch it with his fingers, as if he would tear it off and trample it under his feet? Benjamin was deeply moved, he hesitated, seemed to yield more and more every minute. Mademoiselle, watching them, repeatedly brushed her hair back from her forehead with her hand in enforced calmness, although her coiffure was tidy enough. At last, unable to contain herself any longer, she rose and approached them:—

“Gentlemen, your conference begins to grow tedious to me!”

“Then that is agreed,” said the councillor to Benjamin, turning around. “Mademoiselle, the young man appeals to your magnanimity. You will surely not wish to detain him against his inclination?”

“Benjamin!” she cried, with tear-filled eyes. I must confess I felt sorry for her. He trembled and kept his eyes upon the ground.

“You must be well aware,” continued the councillor, “that you are sacrificing the young man’s future. You are tearing him from his family, from a certain career in life; mademoiselle, I beseech you, do not make him wretched forever!”

“*Him?* Make *him* wretched? O Benjamin, have you grown so heartless? Has it come to this that I must beseech *you* to think of *me*?”

The councillor looked at her coldly. “Mademoiselle, Fame does not say too little of you. You are a great actress. But I assure you, your pains are in vain here. I would advise you, as a friend, to be satisfied with the *rôle* of the virtuous maiden. Are you not aware the young man is yet under paternal authority? He would be forced to leave you immediately. But never mind, we shall come to an agreement without the law; do you not think so? But we will speak of that alone; you will find me prepared to pay a good price for your kindness!”

Her bosom rose and fell violently in her anger, but she could not speak. She pointed to the door.

The councillor folded his arms. “It would be wise in you too, mademoiselle, to avoid all *éclat*. You must recollect that to take

advantage of a headstrong youth's inexperience, is, to say the least, out of fashion and apt to be ill spoken of. It is true, you will tell me he has property. Undeceive yourself. His inheritance from his mother consisted of American bonds, which are worth just the paper they are printed upon, nothing more. You have been misinformed, poor girl; the sooner you get rid of him the better!"

She trembled with rage: the very cups upon the table on which she leaned, danced and rattled.

"Who gives you the right, sir," she gasped with difficulty, "who gives you the right to insult me in my own dwelling? How can you so debase yourself as to hurt a woman, who never hurt you; to condemn any one, and attribute the meanest of motives, without having heard her? I do not detain him. If he chooses to make me wretched, let him go. I love him, poor or rich. He alone has the right to insult me, to make me miserable, and none other. Decide now," she cried, turning to Benjamin, "and that quickly; and then, gentlemen, leave me to myself. Well, Benjamin, speak out: have you been playing with me? Have you been fooling me, or have you been fooled?"

"No," interrupted the councillor. "That is not the question. It is this: Will you follow the lead of passion and folly, or obey reason and duty?" She had stepped between the brothers, and gazed at him with flashing eyes, which seemed to enchant him. He seized her proffered hand and murmured:—"Julia, peerless Julia!" and turned his face away from us.

She looked at us in triumph. "Gentlemen, you will probably receive invitations to the wedding; without such invitations, I do not hope to have the pleasure——"

"Not so fast!" said the pale councillor. "Benjamin, then you determine to go the way I warned you against? Do you give me this pang to take with me into my solitude! Make yourself wretched, as your elder brother did before you; leave your old father no comfort, no happiness——"

Benjamin had turned his head away and seemed not to listen. The councillor took up his hat.

"You wish for war then, mademoiselle?"

"*Vive la guerre!*" she answered smiling.

At that moment the door opened, and the Rabbi entered. He



was clad in his usual old-fashioned garb. With a slow step he approached the actress and said to her:—

“Mademoiselle, pardon an old man for his unbidden intrusion. I learn that I must seek my son in your house; I only wish to take my leave of him, and will not trespass long.”

Benjamin grew purple with confusion, like a schoolboy caught in some mischief. A painful silence ensued. The councillor retired noiselessly into the bay window: I do not think the Rabbi saw him. He seemed to have eyes only for the fugitive.

“Benjamin,” he said with a low voice, “Benjamin, my youngest child, what have I done to you; why are you angry with your father? Why do you steal away so secretly from your father’s house? He who is going on a journey, be it never so short a one, comes and says ‘Good-by,’ and you wish to separate from me forever, and are able to go away without a word of farewell? Oh, surely I have been harsh towards you in some manner; God help me, I know not how! I have infringed your natural rights perhaps. It must be so; otherwise you would not have feared to come to me. I hoped you loved me, and had no fear. But you would have had confidence in me and spoken with me manfully. And though it had broken my heart, I should have answered, ‘You are free, go the way your heart impels you.’ And now, my son, though you denied me the last comfort too, you see I am so poor I can not do without it—alas! do not turn from me, my son; speak, my Benjamin, do not deny me a last farewell; it is for a long, long time——”

He paused, struggling with emotion. The actress stepped nearer and gazed at him in mute astonishment.

“Benjamin, I do not blame you for it. I know you did not wish to see my grief. Yes, perhaps, I would not have spoken as I just said. Perhaps I should have begged you:—‘My only one, my last-born child, see, I am old. Many a sorrow gnaws at my heartstrings; show the old man this kindness: wait till they bear me forth! Leave the aged parent the flattering hope that your mind may change; after his death, act according to your conviction.’ Yes, perhaps you would have had compassion on me, for I am gray before my time. I buried your noble mother while she was young. I had a son, the joy of my heart; I reared him with all a father’s pride, I watched over him and taught him with zeal, with delight; and this son,

before he was of mature age, stole away from me. And I let him go, for I was angry, but my heart wept for my child. Then I said to myself:—‘Why has your first-born forsaken the Holy Law? Of a surety, you have been a poor guide to him therein!’ So I grew doubtful of myself, despaired of my own powers, dared not teach my younger son, but gave him forth, my beloved, among strangers! Alas, my son, when you shall be a father, and if, which God forbid, your own flesh and blood stand up against you, then you will know what a father feels; then will it tear your heart and you will cry to God: ‘Lord take me from this earth!’”

He paused, for his voice trembled.

“And this child, at whose bedside I have often seated myself, when at midnight my eyes were weary with study, and watched how peacefully he slept, and have blessed him and sought my solitary couch, happy and contented—the child whom I sent away from me when the sight of him was my only joy—now——”

He composed himself with an effort and continued:—

“Far be it from me, my son, to demand that you should return, that out of love for your father you should be false to your own conviction. You are old enough to judge for yourself, and if it must be, be it so! But, my son, you know we shall never see each other again, that I shall never hear your beloved voice more, for the Holy One, blessed be He, whose servant in deep humility I profess to be, is a watchful God. Speak then a word to me: you are mine yet; I see you before me still the same as a few days ago, when I exulted in your youthful courage; yet can I think that you love your father. To-morrow and the next day, I shall be alone: my girl will follow a husband, my house will be deserted. I shall sit and study, and at times the book will fall from my hand: I shall speak, but my ears will not hear, for my soul will be with my son. I shall repeat his expressions to myself, fancy his look, his mien, his every movement, and shall say:—Yes, once he *did* love you!”

“Stop!” breathed a hoarse voice, “have you then no word for me?” and a tall figure tottered forth from the window towards the Rabbi who drew back in horror.

“Since I have been permitted, most venerable and honored father, to see your face once again before I die, oh, tell me, you have not utterly rejected me, that a long life of galling self-reproach and misery

has been an atonement for my sin. It has been a fearful atonement, my father, for the Eternal has mercilessly shattered all the glittering things for which I sold myself, shattered them before my eyes!"

He covered his face with his hands.

"Simeon!" cried the old man.

He knelt before his father and hid his countenance against his knee.

"Is it you, my son? Is it you, my Simeon?" and he drew him close to him, weeping aloud. "God bless you, my son!" he sobbed, "God bless you!" My eyes too filled with unaccustomed tears.

"So, father; that is right. Your hand upon my head; it makes me feel well again. Oh, a moment longer; tell me, am I not entirely rejected?"

The Rabbi stood erect, with upraised hand. "Who is rejected before the throne of the All-Merciful? My children, why do you let yourselves be deceived, and flee from the path of your ancestors' God, who placed you upon this earth for blessing? But He will surely follow you, He will not forsake you, His merciful arms are ever open to the penitent! You too, my miserable, my erring son, will depart to His peace, and since you have madly embittered your own life with your own hand, He will think of you in compassion. And as for me, in the lonesome nights, when the new blow—" he looked where Benjamin was standing—"when this fresh grief drives sleep from my eyelids, I will comfort myself with thinking of you, my son. I will feed myself upon sweet hopes for the future. Since God hath condescended to move your haughty heart, Simeon, will He not that of my mild Benjamin too? And if he shall wish to return, shall come to seek his father, and find him no longer in his accustomed place—well, he knows where to look for me then, knows that I shall be waiting in my grave, longing, yearning to hear my son's voice and his sobs of penitence!"

A loud crash interrupted him. He looked up in astonishment. Fragments of a costly china vase were strewn around; Julia had seized it and dashed it to atoms on the floor.

"Enough of this chattering!" she cried, stamping her foot upon the ground, and looking at us in anger. She had never seemed so handsome. The seductive smile had disappeared from her lips, her

cheeks were brightly flushed, and a wonderful expression of strength and determination pervaded her features.

"This company of wise men and lawyers come hither, and can do nothing better than fall to crying on each other's shoulders!" And she burst into a forced ironical laugh.

"Do you then give us counsel, mademoiselle," said the Rabbi, approaching her.

"You ask counsel from the enemy?"

"The enemy is going to become my friend; depend upon it," he answered, gazing at her intently.

She seized his hand and clasped it long in hers. Then she replied:—

"My advice is, take the young man—" she nodded towards Benjamin, upon whom she persistently turned her back—"take the young man and send him back to school; only a schoolboy could sacrifice such a father for such a woman!"

"Do not mock, mademoiselle!" said the old man, somewhat vexed.

"I mock? Indeed, never was I more in earnest!" And in a low voice, riveting her eyes on the ground, she continued:—

"I am a woman, but I have never yet felt myself humbled by any one. I have never deceived any one but those who were themselves deceivers. Is it my fault I have been brought in contact only with apes instead of men?"

With tear-filled eyes she approached the old man. "Never, my father, will I consent to purchase my own doubtful happiness with the certainty of having bowed forever so noble a head as yours. It is the first time I have ever thought of the cost of remorse. Take him back—and—let me always retain the recollection of this hour as one of peace and happiness—forgiveness and—pardon——"

Unable to control her sobs, she burst forth piteously, and leaning her head upon the Rabbi's breast, gave vent to her emotion in tears.

The Rabbi supported her tenderly; "Poor child, poor child!" was all he could articulate.

"Yes, poor I am!" she repeated. "With love in my heart and never a being to lavish it upon, no one who loves me for myself. Benjamin came—I thought—but that too has proved an empty dream!"

"Why a dream?" the young man interrupted her, as she stood



erect and drying her eyes. "Why a dream, Julia? Why shall not two hearts who love each other dearly, and are both free, form an alliance blessed by God, and respected by men?"

"Never!" she cried. "Do you not see the fearful price you would pay? Do you think I should ever forgive myself for having broken your father's heart? Would that I had such a father! Would that I could live for him alone, and draw back from this rotten world of sham and sensuality!"

"Julia, is this your love?" he cried, excitedly.

She looked at him with compassion. "You are young, Benjamin, very young. You insist upon being deceived—and I am so weary of deception—oh, so weary!" And as he approached her beseechingly, "Go!" she said, "do not prolong my torment; go, lest I hate you more than I ever loved you!"

"Serpent!" he exclaimed. "Who enticed me, who ensnared me, and made me believe her happiness, her peace depended upon my love?"

"Has it come to this at length?" she moaned in pain. "Do you not see that I am rebelling against my true self to be able to repel you? Alas, how little men comprehend a woman's heart! Know then," she continued, pressing her hand to her breast, "it is hard to say—but never mind—you are not the first I have forgotten!"

"Nay, daughter!" said the Rabbi; taking her hand; "do what is right, but plainly and truthfully. To what end this hateful mask? No, we all, and I first of all, recognize your greatness of heart with joy. Benjamin is right, Julia, is quite right. It would have been wrong to leave a noble wife who is devoted to him, in order to gratify his father's prejudices; it would have been wrong, and I will own, the fault was mine. He thought to bring me a daughter. I should have rejected her on account of her profession. Praised be God who hath given me the opportunity of seeing my harshness and repenting it. Then let me be, as in the good, old fashion, suitor for my son. Come and be my daughter in reality. Renounce your profession, the hollowness of which you have long recognized, and which can not satisfy a strong mind like yours that yearns for truth. Come and bring joy with you into the house whose doors are open to receive you; you will find a sister there worthy of you. Only one condition—and I can not express how difficult it is for me, a Jewish

Rabbi, to make it—one important condition: I can agree to your union with my son only if you will embrace Judaism.”

She made no reply, but kept her eyes fixed upon the ground in reflection. Benjamin, with joyous countenance, had made a step towards her; he was about to speak, but a sign from his father stopped him.

“It gives me great pain to ask this of you,” the Rabbi continued, “for both my religion and my own inward conviction teach me to consider liberty of conscience to be man’s highest, noblest right. You will think I show myself a priest, happy to snatch a soul. If you have so much confidence in me as to believe that I am speaking without any such ulterior motive, and speaking as I am accustomed to pray before the Omniscient Deity, I will continue with what I have to say.”

She now raised her head erect and gave him a long, steady look. An amiable, almost joyous smile spread over her whole proud countenance.

“I trust and confide in you, my venerable father,” she replied with a firm voice, “as I trust and confide in the All-Merciful God.” Then she fixed her eyes on the ground again.

“I was about explaining, my daughter, why it is so hard for me to make this demand. I grant, nay assert, that you can be just as noble and virtuous remaining in your own faith as if you embrace ours, and that in either case you can reckon with equal confidence upon your Creator’s love.”

“Enough, my father,” she replied abruptly. “You are the first who ever reminded me I had a religion.”

“It is a principle in Israel not to solicit converts from other faiths, not even to accept them easily on their own request. If I now, in virtue of my office, dare to overlook this custom, it is your future happiness which leads me to do so, my dear children. For two beings who close an alliance with each other in truth and self-sacrifice, and pledge themselves to develop therein all the shining qualities which God has endowed them with, must be agreed in all things. Beyond the necessary difference of character, the differences in taste, inclination, which must be effaced, they dare not bring with them into their union chasms which can never be bridged over. You say, my daughter, you have no religion, but——”

"It is enough, my father," she interrupted with that same happy smile I had never noticed before to-day. "I will own that religious prejudices are foreign to me. If my lover were a Mohammedan, I would embrace Islam with the same equanimity!"

The Rabbi shook his head doubtfully.

"But that is not the question," she continued. "It is my misfortune to have been born twenty or thirty years too late; else"—as she smiled at us—"else I could have become a good Jewess."

We looked at her in some surprise.

"Out of love to him," she added, pointing to Rabbi Nathan. "I should have known a man whom I could always have loved; as it is, I do not. Since I can not marry the father, I have no wish for the son!"

She said this so curiously, half in earnest, half laughingly, that we could not make out her meaning. Benjamin made a very rueful countenance; the Rabbi looked at her searchingly.

"What terrifies me in your condition, my father," she went on, taking his hand, "is not the religion. I do not suppose any one ever reproached Rachel with being a Jewess: if some venomous critic ever sneered at her, so much the worse for him. No: what seems to me, after due reflection, an utter impossibility, is that I should give up my profession. The calm and orderliness of your home would be agreeable to me for a time, I think, but I can not live without excitement. I know myself, and I should sin grievously against us both, if I vowed to be contented, if I undertook a task beyond my powers. No, I can not give up the stage, can not give up," she added with a blush, "being admired—or found fault with—not too much, you know; it is my very life to be admired or to be slandered, and I am accustomed to despise my critics. Now that I have lived thus for ten years, and am twenty-seven years old, I must defer the hope of amendment till my old age, if such be in store for me; and therefore I must decline, with heartfelt thanks, your noble proposition. But you will remain my friend, will you not, my father? Whenever I stand in need of advice or of comfort, I shall know where to seek it."

They shook hands in silence.

"And you, my heart—" she hurried toward Benjamin, embraced him passionately, and kissed him—"farewell forever! Take good care

of your dear father, and herewith, gentlemen, farewell all! farewell!" She dismissed us with a wave of her hand.

The councillor bowed coldly. I went up to her, and could not refrain from warmly shaking her hand, and asking permission to inquire after her welfare from time to time. She looked at me in some surprise and nodded assent.

We went home, the brothers walking arm-in-arm. I followed with uncle. We were all silent, yet under the spell of that wondrous woman, and almost regretting in our hearts that we had succeeded in what we had worked so hard for.

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## LETTER XXIX.

MAY 1ST, 185—.

WE are coming, dearest father; we accept your invitation. My uncle desires remembrance to you, and begs you to return his children. He remains behind: I hope not forever. My sweet wife longs to meet you, to become your daughter. Benjamin is silent and thoughtful: his father treats him with touching consideration, as if he had erred towards his son. It is on his account I am hastening our departure: he must be placed in other surroundings, and acquire confidence in himself. Whether he will take part in my project, or pursue his own plans, I know not yet: it is enough that he accompanies us. He insisted upon his father's setting him some task of reparation, some penalty, but in vain. "Come back to me, my son," he replied, "as a true and thorough MAN, and rival Samuel in being a true and thorough Jew!"

He gave me some of his family-papers; I inclose a few. *Entre nous*, I think he is the author. He gives his blessing on my plans, and I have promised to visit him with Rachel in a year's time.

Excuse my abrupt ending; pleasurable excitement lames my pen. Soon I shall see you again, soon grasp your loving hand. Till then, farewell, farewell!





## NOTES.

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1. Page 1.—The Mishna (“Doctrine,” from *shannah*, late Hebrew, to study) is primarily a Jewish legal work, containing the laws proper, as embodied in the Pentateuch, together with their application to cases not there mentioned or anticipated. In addition, the Mishna contains some explanation of the precepts themselves and various ethical doctrines. The whole was at first purely oral, taught by father to son, or teacher to pupil by word of mouth. It grew in bulk considerably as new cases, unprovided for, arose, the decisions on which were incorporated. But toward the early part of the third century of the common reckoning, Rabbi Judah (150–210), surnamed the Prince (*Hannassi*), and the Holy (*Hakkadosh*), systematized the large mass of law and decisions, and reduced the whole to writing. He divided it into the six parts or orders we know now, containing 63 treatises, the orders bearing the following titles: 1. *Zeraim* (Seeds), treating of Benedictions and Husbandry; 2. *Moëd* (Festival); 3. *Nashim* (Women), treating of Marriage Law; 4. *Nezikin* (Damages), Civil and Criminal Suits; 5. *Kodashim* (Holy Things), Temple, Sacrifices, Food; 6. *Tahoroth* (Purity), Laws of Holiness and Cleanliness. Its language is New-Hebrew or Rabbinical, a mixture of Hebrew, much Aramaic, and some Greek and Latin words. The chief editions are those of Surenhuis (6 vols., sm. folio, Amsterd. 1698–1703, with Latin translation and notes); by a Jewish Literary Society in Berlin (6 vols. 4<sup>o</sup>, 1831–34), with German translation in Hebrew letters. Rabe edited a free version in German (Onolzbach, 1760–63), and Revs. D. A. de Sola and M. J. Raphall published an English translation (“Eighteen Treatises of the Mishna,” London, 1843). A fine stereotyped edition is published by Sittenfeld of Berlin, and the late Dr. Geiger issued a handy Grammar and Reading-Book on the Mishna (Breslau, 1845).
  
2. Page 18.—After the completion of the Mishna by R. Judah, it furnished the basis for further amplification and explanation, both from debate upon its text and its application to fresh cases. Rab Ashi, Principal of the Rabbinical College of Sura in Babylon, collected these debates and decisions upon the Mishna and attempted to reduce the immense mass to something like order. He died, however, in 427, with his work unfinished. Some of his successors carried out his plan, and about the year 500, this new collection was completed under the title of *Gemara* (Complementary Law).

This with the Mishna is known as the Talmud. R. Ashi's collection is called the Babylonian Talmud, to distinguish it from a similar one, of one-fourth the extent, compiled in the beginning of the fourth century from the decisions of the colleges in Palestine, which took the name of the Jerusalem Talmud. The former, which is the recognized authority, lacks almost all Gemara to the first and sixth books of the Mishna; the latter that of the fifth and sixth. The Gemara, being but a commentary to the Mishna, is never published without it. The editions of the Babylonian Talmud have been numerous; the latest, by Goldberg, printed by Sittenfeld of Berlin, 1861-1868, is very fine, and with its 2113 double sheets folio is said to be the largest work ever stereotyped. The history of the Talmud is a history in itself, so varied have been the vicissitudes it has survived; it formed the subject of a remarkable essay by the late Em. Deutsch, 1867; of one in Macmillan's Magazine, 1873; comp. the Translator's Lecture before the Young Men's Hebrew Association, New York, December 19th, 1874. The Talmud has never been translated; Dr. M. Pinner of Berlin projected a German version to be furnished in 28 vols., but only one volume was ever published (1842). A French version of the first Treatise ("*Berakhoth*") appeared within the last five years.

3. Page 21.—Castalia was a fountain at the foot of Mt. Parnassus, near the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in Greece. Like the mountain, it was sacred to Apollo, and is here used as an epithet for him as shown in the famous Apollo Belvedere statue, representing him in the moment of his victory over the Python. The statue, of heroic size and displaying the very perfection of manly beauty, was found 1503 at Porto D'Anzo (ancient Antium). Its author and date are unknown.
4. Page 41.—A jocular allusion to the custom of crushing a glass under foot at the celebration of a Jewish wedding, at which it is usual to wish "*Mazel Tov*," "Good Fortune," "Prosperity," to the happy pair. The meaning of the custom is a matter of dispute; according to some, it is a slight sign of mourning, to recall the ruin of our state and independence; according to others, it is merely to warn us of the brevity and uncertainty of all human bliss.
5. Page 47.—A reference to the Rabbinical aphorism directed against public reproof and "putting to shame." It was taught before Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak, "Whoever causeth his neighbor's face to become pallid with shame in public, is accounted as if he had shed his blood." "Well hast thou said!" was the approving response, "for we can see the red color flee (from the cheek) and the pallor appear!" (TALMUD, Treatise *Baba Metsia*, p. 58, B.) In the same place quite a long discussion of the topic ensues, in which we learn that the "men of the West" (Babylon) were particularly observant of this humane provision, and Simon ben Yochai is reported to have said, "Better cast thyself into a burning furnace than shame thy neighbor in public!" (*ibid.*, p. 59, A.)
6. Page 55.—According to Froissart's Chronicles (HERZBERG).

7. Page 79.—“The Talmud will not believe, although stone walls bend for proof.” An allusion to a passage in the Talmud, relating to a dispute upon a juristic decision, in which Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanos and Rabbi Joshua were of opposed opinions, the former refusing to yield to Joshua's traditional interpretation, which was the one accepted by all his contemporaries. To prove his position, it is related, he exclaimed.—“Let yonder locust-tree bear witness to what I say!” and lo! the tree was moved by supernatural agency four hundred cubits off; but he was answered, “A locust-tree can give no proof!” “Then let the river corroborate my decision!” Forthwith the water began to flow backwards. “The river can not be admitted as proof,” was the rejoinder. “Then shall these college-walls bear me out!” he cried, and behold! the very walls of the assembly room commenced to bow themselves, and the ceiling had fallen if R. Joshua had not scolded them for such interference in a juristic debate. And the Talmud naïvely continues:—“The walls did not fall out of respect to Rabbi Joshua, nor straighten themselves on account of R. Eliezer, and thus they are bulged unto this day.” (TALMUD, Treatise *Baba Metsia*, p. 59, B.) The meaning of this quasi-allegory, in its characteristic Oriental garb, is of course, as Rabbi Nathan points out, to declare the inadmissibility of arguments *ad hominem* in logical debate.
8. Page 79.—An allusion to the well-known legend of the three rings presented by the father (God) to his sons (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), among which one contained a genuine stone, the others false ones. See Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*.
9. Page 81.—The Teraphim, the Syrian household idols (like the Latin Penates), stolen by Rachel from her father Laban, probably as charms or talismans. (Genesis xxxi., 19.)
10. Page 87.—“The beginning of wisdom is *the fear of the Lord!*” Psalm cxi., 10.
11. Page 104.—An allusion to the hymn “*Lecha dodi*,” “Come, Beloved, to meet the *Bride*, to receive the *Sabbath*,” written by R. Solomon ben Moses Halevi Alkabetz, a cabalistic writer of the end of the sixteenth century in Safet, Palestine. The hymn, the first letters of the verses of which in order give the name Salomo Halevi, has been incorporated in the Jewish Ritual (Service for the Eve of Sabbath) throughout the world.
12. Page 106.—The command of the fringes in Numbers xxxvii., 15.
13. Page 149.—The Jewish declaration of faith in the Unity of God:—“Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God is the ONE Eternal!” (Deuter. vi., 4.)
14. Page 161.—“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew v., 17, 18.)
15. Page 184.—Bethar, a fortress, the ruins of which are still extant, about one mile from the Mediterranean, and four miles south of Cæsarea, the seat of the Roman government of Judea. Eusebius falsely places Bethar



near Jerusalem. In the widespread and fierce rebellion which broke out, in the first quarter of the second century of the vulgar reckoning, against the Romans, under the emperor Adrian, Barkochba (according to Grætz. Barkoziba) was the valorous leader of the Jews. The Roman governor of the province was T. Annius Rufus, nicknamed by the insurgents Tyranus Rufus. Barkochba was victorious for two years, but when Julius Severus, the greatest general of the age, was recalled from Britain to act against him, he retreated into Bethar, which fell after a bloody and desperate siege of twelve months (134).

16. Page 185.—Alluding to the episode of the woman taken in adultery. John viii., 7.
17. Page 190.—Sakyamuni, Holy Sakya or prince of the royal house of Kōśāla, is a name for Buddha (“the enlightened”), the founder of Buddhism. He was supposed to have been an incarnation of Vishnu, the Supreme God, and to have been born of the virgin Māya. After meditating on the vanity of human happiness, he left his father’s house and became a hermit, then a preacher, and performed many miracles. Of a speculative turn, he attempted to devise means to combat the evils to which men are exposed. He rejected the self-torturing system of the Brahmins, and taught abstinence from all that could give pain, whether bodily or mental, or excite desires, and exhorted to meditation (*Nirvana*). To soften the evils of life, he commanded chastity, poverty, patience, and humility. Buddha embodied his exhortations in the common language of the people (Pali), and giving a word of consolation and encouragement to all who sought it, he soon gained numerous adherents and disciples, the latter of whom, as wandering celibate beggars, were called Bhikshu or Āramana (Tamers of the Senses). This occurred 543 years before the era of the man of Nazareth.
18. Page 190.—Buddha’s instructions regarding intercourse with neighbors, embodied concealment of one’s own good deeds, open declaration of one’s faults, obedience to parents, good usage of servants and dependents, liberality toward relations, and prohibition of cruelty to animals and of scandal bearing.
19. Page 196.—Referring to Jeremiah xxv., 15.
20. Page 224.—*Kaddish*, the sanctification of God and declaration of submission to His will. A sublime prayer, written in Chaldee, for the better comprehension of the people of the age of its composition, and recited by mourners at public worship. It is repeated by children in memory of their parents during the year following their decease, and also upon the anniversary of the day of death.

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